THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE

VOLUME I

FROM THE BEGINNINGS TO THE
CYCLES OF ROMANCE

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

EDITED
BY
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AND
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VOLUME I

From the BEGINNINGS *to the* CYCLES OF ROMANCE

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PREFATORY NOTE

The Cambridge History of English Literature was first published between the years 1907 and 1916. The General Index Volume was issued in 1927.

In the preface to Volume I the general editors explained their intentions. They proposed to give a connected account of the successive movements of English literature, to describe the work of writers both of primary and of secondary importance, and to discuss the interaction between English and foreign literatures. They included certain allied subjects such as oratory, scholarship, journalism and typography, and they did not neglect the literature of America and the British Dominions. The History was to unfold itself, "unfettered by any preconceived notions of artificial eras or controlling dates," and its judgments were not to be regarded as final.

This reprint of the text and general index of the *History* is issued in the hope that its low price may make it easily available to a wider circle of students and other readers who wish to have on their shelves the full story of English Literature.

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1932

gratitude to George Sherburn, he is indeed rare. Certainly it is fitting that a collection of essays devoted to Pope and Pope's contemporaries be gathered in his honour.

Only a few of the many who would wish to honour George Sherburn are represented in this volume. Since limitation was necessary, essays were accepted from scholars in America and Britain whose research and special interests closely parallel his own. This procedure has resulted, it is hoped, in a unified volume instead of a collection of unrelated studies. Some are chiefly critical; some stress the historical approach. There are new estimates of major authors, studies in the background of Augustan thought, reinterpretations of well-known poems, and the first printing of newly discovered documents of lasting significance. Despite this diversity of approach, it is nevertheless Alexander Pope, his friends and contemporaries, who have remained the central theme of the volume.

It is the hope of the contributors that these essays will please George Sherburn, to whom in gratitude and affection they are herewith presented.

J. L. C.
L. A. L.

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melancholy to add that we often have to appeal to this part of his story, to assure ourselves that Pope was really deserving of some affection.'[1] Such an admission that some human qualities, at once heavily discounted, may be discovered in a venomous creature lays bare the whole mental process of denigration in a passage which its author probably did not intend to be harsh.

It would seem, too, that too much has been made of the impairing influence on Swift and Pope of their 'crazy constitutions', as if their satire were a phase of their medical history. There has grown up around them a kind of cult of the satiric genius as a tortured mind inhabiting a tortured body. Pope's deformity and weakness seem to add an appropriate grotesqueness to a sinister character. Swift's final insanity, which, so far as modern medical authorities can determine, was most likely the last stage of a life-long disease of the inner ear and which was therefore unrelated to his satire either as cause or effect, is raised to a more than medical significance as the fitting conclusion of the career of a bitter satirist, the awful disintegration of a great mad genius in self-devouring rage. And his remark that he would die like the tree, first at the top, is repeated with all the solemnity of an oracular doom in Greek tragedy, whereas common sense tells us that, within the limits of Swift's medical knowledge, it could only have been the apprehension of a sufferer from chronic headaches. Had Swift not lived beyond the scriptural age of three score and ten, his biographies would not have been overcharged with these dramatic themes of premonition and fate. We should still have had the 'mad parson', but we might have had fewer intimations that his satire verges on madness, in quite another sense.

As for the diseases of the mind, the heaviest charge against Pope and Swift is a negativeness of spirit which depresses the worth and dignity of human life. But pessimism is a concept so vague and broad that it often leads to erroneous inferences and interpretations. The Tory satirists, the group gathered about Pope and Swift, did not suffer from philosophical or religious pessimism, or from anything that can be called *Weltschmerz*. There is no spiritual *malaise* in them; their gloom is not an enervating apathy. They seem generally to have had firm faith in the ultimate right order of things, and we must avoid carrying back to them such more recent philosophies of despair as are

[1] *Alexander Pope* (1908), p. 100.

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS

By the time the English settlements in Britain had assumed permanent form, little seems to have been left from the prior Roman occupation to influence the language and literature of the invaders. Their thought and speech, no less than their manners and customs, were of direct Teutonic origin, though these were afterwards, in some slight degree, modified by Celtic ideas, derived from the receding tribes, and, later, and, in a greater measure, by the Christian and Latin elements that resulted from the mission of St Augustine. Danish inroads and Norman-French invasions added fresh qualities to the national character and to its modes of expression; but, in the main, English literature, as we know it, arose from the spirit inherent in the viking makers of England before they finally settled in this island.

Of the origins of Old English poetry we know nothing; what remains to us is chiefly the reflection of earlier days. The fragments that we possess are not those of a literature in the making, but of a school which had passed through its age of transition from ruder elements. The days of apprenticeship were over; the Englishman of the days of *Beowulf* and *Widsith*, *The Ruin* and *The Seafarer*, knew what he wished to say, and said it, without exhibiting any apparent trace of groping after things dimly seen or apprehended. And from those days to our own, in spite of periods of decadence, of apparent death, of great superficial change, the chief constituents of English literature—a reflective spirit, attachment to nature, a certain carelessness of "art," love of home and country and an ever present consciousness that there are things worse than death—these have, in the main, continued unaltered. "Death is better," says Wiglaf, in *Beowulf*, "for every knight than ignominious life" and, though Claudio feels death to be "a fearful thing," the sentiment is only uttered to enable Shakespeare to respond through the lips of Isabella, "And shamed life a hateful."

It is, for instance, significant of much in the later history of the

alluded to Socrates or Plato except with respect. But we know that Swift valued the Socratic dialogues, not for any 'abstractions and transcendentals', but for their ethical and political wisdom. Gulliver's master among the Houyhnhnms laughed 'that a creature pretending to reason should value itself upon the knowledge of other people's conjectures, and in things where that knowledge, if it were certain, could be of no use. Wherein he agreed entirely with the sentiments of Socrates, as Plato delivers *them*; which I mention as the highest honour I can do that prince of philosophers.' Moral and political wisdom occupies a level a little lower than metaphysics, and doubtless a little lower also than the greatest poetry. But Swift's genius moved in this middle flight, and here his massive common sense and his satiric gift had their full opportunity. The moment we try to read more into Swift than he read in Socrates, we misinterpret him. In one of his greatest passages he praised credulity as 'a more peaceful possession of the mind than curiosity', and laid down the proposition 'that wisdom, which converses about the surface', is therefore preferable 'to that pretended philosophy, which enters into the depth of things, and then comes gravely back with information and discoveries, that in the inside they are good for nothing'.[1] Anyone who has had experience in reading this passage with modern young people can testify that it is more often than not taken as the language of philosophical nihilism. But Swift was not thinking in metaphysical terms about appearance and reality. He was letting his irony play over the repugnance some people feel for satire, for 'the art of exposing weak sides, and publishing infirmities'. It was in 'most corporeal beings', that is, human beings, such as the flayed woman and the stripped carcass of the beau, that 'the outside hath been infinitely preferable to the in'. The 'serene, peaceful state, of being a fool among knaves' is a moral condition which we may choose, but for which we must ourselves accept the responsibility.

In this exposure of the insides of human nature, in stripping the human carcass, the satirists were united, but again only on the level of practical common sense; they were observers, not spinners of theory. They naturally ignored the cynical materialistic psychology of Hobbes and Mandeville, which was completely alien to their spirit. But it is significant that they

[1] *A Tale of A Tub*, section ix.

had penetrated inland and taken to more pastoral habits; when, also, the leaven of Christianity had worked.

The first English men of letters of whom we have record—smiths of song, as the poet-priests are called in *The Ynglinga Saga*—were the gleemen or minstrels who played on the harp and chanted heroic songs while the ale-mug or mead-cup was passed round, and who received much reward in their calling. The teller of the tale in *Widsith* is a typical minstrel of this kind, concerned with the exercise of his art. The scop[1] composed his verses and "published" them himself; most probably he was a great plagiarist, a forerunner of later musicians whose "adoption" of the labours of their predecessors is pardoned for the sake of the improvements made on the original material. The music of skirling bagpipes and of the regimental bands of later times are in the direct line of succession from the chanting of tribal lays by bards as warriors rushed to the fight; the "chanties" of modern sailors stand in the place of the songs of sea-rovers as they revelled in the wars of the elements, or rested inactive on the lonely seas. And the gift of song was by no means confined to professionals. Often the chieftain himself took up the harp and sang, perhaps a little boastfully, of great deeds. At the other end of the scale, we hear of the man whose duty it was to take a turn at the stable-work of a monastery being sad at heart when the harp was passed round and he had no music to give; and the plough-lad, when he had drawn his first furrow, revealed both his capacity for song and his nature-worship, with faint, if any, traces of Christianity, in lines perhaps among the oldest our language has to show:

Hal wes thu, folde, fira modor,
beo thu growende on godes faethme;
fodre gefylled firum to nytte.

Hale be thou Earth, Mother of men!
Fruitful be thou in the arms of the god.
Be filled with thy fruit for the fare-need of man![2]

Of the history of these early poems, as much as is known, or as can fairly be set forth, is given in the following pages. *Beowulf*—romance, history and epic—is the oldest poem on a great scale, and in the grand manner, that exists in any Teutonic language. It is full of incident and good fights, simple in aim and clear in execution; its characters bear comparison with those of the

[1] A minstrel of high degree, usually attached to a court.
[2] Stopford Brooke's version.

when he could assume the vantage of a seigniorial detachment; he played the roles of spectator, psychologist, and stylist. For the author of the *Maxims* a fault in mankind was something to be disdainfully indicated and wittily exposed; but for Swift it was also something to be judged, castigated, and corrected. Swift wrote, not from a position of detachment, but in the stream of events. Aside from his *bagatelles*, he was normally a publicist, a man of action, by every instinct a manager of affairs. From his retreat at Letcombe in the fateful month of July 1714 he truly described himself to Arbuthnot: 'I could never let people run mad without telling and warning them sufficiently.' His whole biography is a continuous record of his attempts to patch up differences, guide the choice of policies, abolish abuses, manage the presentation of new political and ecclesiastical measures, and in general serve as counsellor to anyone and everyone with whom business or friendship brought him into contact. His interest in history, which Professor Nichol Smith has noted,[1] is another aspect of his eminently practical cast of mind. His satire is so largely occasional and journalistic because of this innate urge for action, and it can be fully understood only as a part of the history of his time.

As these practical urges of Swift's nature differentiate his satire on the one hand from the amused detachment of La Rochefoucauld, so on the other they distinguish it from the depressive melancholy that feeds on stagnant brooding. The satire of Swift, even at its bitterest, never depends for its intensity on any sense of frustration; it has the force of intellectual statement—often mock-scientific in tone—and has the effect of arousing in the reader, by means of the *vis comica* and indignation, a will to action which is sympathetic with Swift's own character. Even the darkest page of Swift leaves us with this feeling of soundness at the core, with a firm conviction of our moral competence and responsibility. It is the expression of a bitter but not a sick mind, and has the invigorating power of a call to action.

This firm grip on actualities is characteristic also of the satire of the other members of Swift's brotherhood, Arbuthnot, Gay, and Pope. They were as ready as Swift, whose genius towered among them, to aline themselves in political struggles, even though political parties were still thought undesirable in prin-

[1] *Letters of Swift to Ford* (1935), Introduction, pp. xxxi ff.

which these poems were written were full of war and national struggle; not until long after the settlers had made their permanent home in the new land does the poet turn to the quieter aspects of nature or celebrate less strenuous deeds.

We can only use comparative terms, however, in speaking of the peaceful years. Apart from the civil struggles of the English in their new home, only two hundred years elapsed after St Augustine's conversion of Kent before the Danes began to arrive and, in the centuries that followed, the language of lamentation and woe that Gildas had used in connection with the struggle between Briton and Saxon was echoed in the writings of Alcuin when Lindisfarne was burned, in the homilies of Wulfstan and in the pages of the *Chronicle*. Yet in the years that had passed England had risen to literary pre-eminence in Europe. She took kindly to the Latin and Greek culture brought her in the seventh century by the Asian Theodore and the African Hadrian, scholars learned in worldly, as well as in divine, lore, who "made this island, once the nurse of tyrants, the constant home of philosophy[1]." The love of letters had been fostered in the north by English scholars; by Bede's teacher, Benedict Biscop, foremost of all, who founded the monasteries of Jarrow and Wearmouth, enriched them with books collected by himself and, in his last days, prayed his pupils to have a care over his library. Bede's disciple was Egbert of York, the founder of its school and the decorator of its churches, and Alcuin obtained his education in the cloister school of his native city.

The seven liberal arts of the *trivium* (grammar, logic, rhetoric) and the *quadrivium* (astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, music) were so ably taught and so admirably assimilated in the monastic schools that, when Alcuin forsook York for the palace school of Charles the Great, he appealed for leave to send French lads to bring back "flowers of Britain" to Tours, from the "garden of Paradise" in York, a "garden" described by him in often quoted lines[2].

There came an end to all this when "the Danish terror" made a waste from the Humber to the Tyne. Northumbria had aided Rome and Charles the Great in the service of letters while the rest of Europe, save Ireland, had little to show, and now men were too busy fighting for home and freedom to think of letters. It was not until the days of Alfred that the tide began again to turn from

[1] William of Malmesbury, I, 12.
[2] *Poema de Pontificibus et Sanctis Ecclesiae Eboracensis.*

Bolingbroke. In the sequence of events leading up to the final catastrophe they had an opportunity to observe how precariously the welfare of the whole nation, present and future, depended on traits of human character. In bitterness they had to admit to themselves and to one another that England was, from their point of view, being betrayed by their own friends, Oxford and Bolingbroke, not to mention the indecisive poor sick queen. Swift indicated publicly his own forecast of the disaster that was coming by withdrawing early in the summer to Letcombe, whence he refused angrily all solicitations to return to the scene where the drama was playing itself out. He was 'weary to death of Courts and Ministers and business and politics. . . . I shall say no more but that I care not to live in storms when I can no longer do service in the ship and am able to get out of it.'[1] He was, however, busy writing something that he thought would 'vex' the great ministers; it was the pamphlet, *Some Free Thoughts upon the Present State of Affairs*, in which he set forth how, with other policies, and more wisdom, and less foolish dissension among the ministers, the 'present state of affairs' might have been far different. 'It may serve for a great lesson of humiliation to mankind', Swift was writing in the rectory at Letcombe, 'to behold the habits and passions of men otherwise highly accomplished, triumphing over interest, friendship, honour, and their own personal safety, as well as that of their country, and probably of a most gracious princess, who hath entrusted it to them.'[2] Such were the reflections Swift intended to publish to the nation as the crisis was approaching. The pamphlet was a castigating sermon to his friends, the Tory ministers, who had been measured by the moral test and found wanting. They had also failed by the test of common sense, from first to last so important in the eyes of Swift; their 'mystical manner of proceeding' baffled and galled him:

I have been frequently assured by great ministers, that politics were nothing but common sense; which, as it was the only thing they spoke, so it was the only thing they could have wished I should not believe. God hath given the bulk of mankind a capacity to understand reason when it is fairly offered; and by reason they would easily be governed, if it were left to their choice. Those

[1] Swift to Archdeacon Walls, 11 June 1714.
[2] Swift, *Prose Works*, ed. Temple Scott, v. 405.

CHAPTER II

RUNES AND MANUSCRIPTS

When the English still lived in their continental homes they shared with the neighbouring kindred tribes an alphabet which may well be described as the national Germanic alphabet, since there is evidence that it was used throughout the Germanic territory, both in the outposts of Scandinavia and in the countries watered by the Rhine and the Danube. The origin of this early script is obscure; some writers hold that it was borrowed from the Latin alphabet, whereas others think that it was of Greek origin. From its wide use amongst the Germanic tribes, we must, perforce, conclude that it was of considerable antiquity, at all events older than the earliest Scandinavian inscriptions, which, in all probability, go back as far as the third century of our era. That it was used in the fourth century is proved since, at that time, Ulfilas, bishop of the West Goths, had borrowed from it the signs of *u* and *o* for his newly-constructed alphabet. Moreover, there can be no doubt that the Goths must have brought the knowledge of it from their early homes in the north before the great wave of the Hunnish invasion swept them away from kith and kindred, finally setting them down on the shores of the Danube and the Black Sea.

The name of these early Germanic characters seems also to have been the same amongst all the tribes. Its Old English form, *rún*, differs little from the corresponding early German or Scandinavian forms, and the meaning of the word (mystery, secret, secret counsel) seems also widely spread. This word lived on through Middle English times, and a derivative *rúnian* appears in Shakespeare as *roun* or *round* (a form still retained in the expression "to *round* in one's ear"). The separate letters were known as *rúnstafas* and the interpretation of them as *rǽdan*, which, in modern English, still lives on in the expression "to read a riddle."

The runes were, in all probability, originally carved in wood, and sometimes filled in with red paint to make them more distinct. The technical term for this cutting or engraving is

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On 15 October Pope expressed a hope that 'you are coming towards us, and that you incline more and more to your old friends in proportion as you draw nearer to them; in short that you are getting into our vortex'. Two days later Arbuthnot added his plea: 'I cannot help imagining some of our old club met together like mariners after a storm.' It was as mariners after a storm that they met again the following summer.

But new storms had been brewing, and, with their sense of solidarity renewed, they were soon to be engaged in a prolonged satirical crusade against the degeneracy of the times. Even their ridicule of pedantry, dullness, and bad taste now assumed a larger social significance, as related to their general attack on moral and political corruption. Dr. Johnson, whose misfortune it was never to understand Swift, thought they were all guilty of self-righteousness:

> From the letters that pass between him [Swift] and Pope it might be inferred that they, with Arbuthnot and Gay, had engrossed all the understanding and virtue of mankind, that their merits filled the world; or that there was no hope of more. They shew the age involved in darkness, and shade the picture with sullen emulation.[1]

The satirist is perforce a judge, and he is nothing unless he can speak with the voice of righteousness. The darkness of his gloom is the measure of the depth of his indignation, and a sense of isolation is inevitable in his calling. Johnson had himself in his younger days joined forces with the Tories against the corruption of the Walpole era, and his satire in *London* is as gloomy and scornful as any. The warm friendship and mutual confidence which Pope and Swift and their friends so constantly reaffirmed in their letters was the obverse of their common bitterness over the decay of the nation. It is possible to agree in substance with the somewhat sentimental comment of Richter, with which Birkbeck Hill annotated the passage just quoted from Johnson:

> Have not many others felt themselves, like me, warmed and encouraged by the touching quiet love of these manly hearts, which, though cold, cutting, and sharp to the outer world, yet laboured and throbbed in their common inner world warmly and tenderly for one another?[2]

Good satire may be withering, it may be dark anger, it may be painfully bitter; but it cannot be great satire without having at

[1] *Lives of the Poets*, ed. Birkbeck Hill, iii. 61. [2] Ibid. 62, note 1.

touched with a piece of bark, whereon spells were written. This made her mad; but, according to Saxo, it was "a gentle revenge to take for all the insults he had received." Saxo also relates[1] a gruesome tale how, by means of spells engraved on wood, and placed under the tongue of a dead man, he was forced to utter strains terrible to hear, and to reveal the no less terrible secrets of the future. In the Icelandic Sagas, references to the supernatural power of the runes are equally explicit. In the Saga of Egill Skallagrímsson, who lived in the tenth century, it is told how a maiden's illness had been increased because the would-be healer, through ignorance, cut the wrong runes, and thus endangered her life. Egill destroys the spell by cutting off the runes and burning the shavings in the fire; he then slips under the maiden's pillow the staff whereon he had cut the true healing runes. Immediately the maiden recovers.

Side by side with the early magic use of runes there is also clear evidence that, at an earlier period, they served as a means of communication, secret or otherwise. Saxo relates, in this respect[2], how Amlethus (Hamlet) travelled to England accompanied by two retainers, to whom was entrusted a secret letter graven on wood, which, as Saxo remarks, was a kind of writing-material frequently used in olden times. In the *Egilssaga* mentioned above, Egill Skallagrímsson's daughter Thorgerðr is reported to have engraved, on the *rúnakefli* or "runic staff," the beautiful poem *Sunatorrek*, in which her aged father laments the death of his son, the last of his race.

These few instances, taken from amongst a great number, prove that runes played an important part in the thoughts and lives of the various Germanic tribes. The greater number of runic inscriptions which have come down to our times, and by far the most important, are those engraved on stone monuments. Some of these merely bear the name of a fallen warrior, while others commemorate his exploits, his death, or his life as a whole. These inscriptions on stones and rocks occur only in England and Scandinavia, from which fact we may, perhaps, infer that this use of runes was a comparatively late development. Some of the very earliest extant inscriptions may be regarded as English, since they are found either within Angeln, the ancient home of the nation—for instance, those of Torsbjaerg,—or not far from that district.

From what has been said, it is clear that the English, on their arrival in this island, must have been conversant with their national

[1] Ed. Holder, p. 22. [2] Ed. Holder, p. 92.

Lost is his God, his Country, every thing:
And nothing left but Homage to a King!
The vulgar herd turn off to roll with Hogs,
To run with Horses, or to hunt with Dogs;
But, sad example! never to escape
Their Infamy, still keep the human shape.[1]

The Mysteries which are thus happily initiated under the highest auspices lead directly to the final triumph of Chaos and Universal Darkness in those concluding lines which Dr. Johnson always praised as noble, and which bring to a climax and conclusion the satirical career of Pope in all its aspects. After that pronouncement of doom there was nothing more to be said.

But Pope and his friends, apostles of disenchantment, were by no means alone in their apprehensions for England. Walpole enjoys a bad pre-eminence among English statesmen for drawing upon himself the hostility of writers of all parties and shades of party, men representing the best elements in the nation. Poets and satirists alike show the age involved in darkness. The old Tories associated amicably with the younger Whigs, the Boy Patriots. By 1735 Pope was on the friendliest terms with the future Earl of Chatham, whose letters and speeches at this time abounded with such expressions as 'this gloomy scene' and 'this disgraced country'. This was the age that we know from Hogarth's pictures, from Fielding's political farces and *Jonathan Wild*. The literature of protest was copious, and Warton's list of some of the notable contributions will indicate its great variety of source and nature:

About this time a great spirit of liberty was prevalent. All the men of wit and genius joined in increasing it. Glover wrote his *Leonidas*; Nugent his *Odes to Mankind* and *to Mr. Pulteney*; King his *Miltonis Epistola* and *Templum Libertatis*; Thomson his *Britannia*, his *Liberty*, and his *Agamemnon*; Mallet his *Mustapha*; Brooke his *Gustavus Vasa*; Pope his *Imitations* and these two *Dialogues* [the *Epilogue to the Satires*]; and Johnson his *London*.[2]

In his poem Johnson described the metropolis of those 'degenerate days' in these terms:

Here let those reign, whom pensions can incite
To vote a patriot black, a courtier white;

[1] *Dunciad*, iv. 517–28.
[2] Quoted by Birkbeck Hill in Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, iii. 179, note 6.

king of Northumbria, and Aethelred, king of Mercia, A.D. 679, and whose fetters fell off whenever his brother, who thought him dead, celebrated mass for the release of his soul. His captor, however, who knew nothing about the prayers, wondered greatly, and inquired whether the prisoner had on him *litterae solutoriae*, that is, letters which had the power of loosening bonds[1]. Again, in *Beowulf* (l. 591), a person who broached a theme of contention is said to "unbind the runes of war." In the poem called *Daniel* (l. 741), the mysterious and terrible writing on the wall of Belshazzar's palace is described as a rune. In the *Dialogue of Salomon and Saturn*[2] there is a curious travesty of an old heathen spell. In treating of the powers and virtues of the Pater Noster, the poet gradually inserts all the runes that serve to make up the prayer, each, however, being accompanied by the corresponding Latin capital letter. Thereupon he advises every man to sing the Pater Noster before drawing his sword against a hostile band of men, and also to put the fiends to flight by means of God's word; otherwise they will stay his hand when he has to defend his life, and bewitch his weapon by cutting on it fatal letters and death signs. We could scarcely wish for a better illustration of the way in which Christianity combated the old beliefs, substituting the Pater Noster for the ancient heathen war-spell, reading a new meaning into the old rites and shifting to fiends and devils the power of making runes of victory or of death, a power formerly in the hands of pagan gods.

When used as ordinary writing characters, without any taint of magic, runes appear to have met with more tolerant treatment. The earliest inscriptions extant in this country consist mainly of proper names, in most cases those of the owners of the engraved article. The Thames sword, for instance, bears, in addition to the runic alphabet, the name of its owner, Beagnoþ. Again, Beowulf is represented as finding in Grendel's cave a sword of ancient workmanship, with rune-staves on the hilt, giving the name of the warrior for whom the sword had first been made. Similarly, an eighth century ring bears, partly in runic, partly in Roman, characters, the legend "Æþred owns me, Eanred engraved me." There are also references in Old English literature to the use of runes as a means of communication. We are reminded of the *rúna-kefli* of the Icelandic sagas on reading the little poem called *The Husband's*

[1] The Old English version renders this by *alysendlecan rúne*, "loosening runes."
[2] Ed Kemble, pp. 14 and 90.

similar judgement in his commentary on Pope's two *Dialogues* of 1738:

> The satire in these pieces is of the strongest kind; sometimes, direct and declamatory, at others, ironical and oblique. It must be owned to be carried to excess. Our country is represented as totally ruined, and overwhelmed with dissipation, depravity, and corruption. Yet this very country, so emasculated and debased by every species of folly and wickedness, in about twenty years afterwards, carried its triumphs over all its enemies, through all the quarters of the world, and astonished the most distant nations with a display of uncommon efforts, abilities, and virtues. So vain and groundless are the prognostications of poets, as well as politicians.[1]

It was the fate of all the literature of the Opposition to Walpole to appear excessive as it receded into the past. All the Cassandra prophecies of doom, the bitter diatribes of the satirists, the patriotic appeals of the poets, even the jeremiads of Pitt himself, faded into historical documents. Henceforth, to recapture their original appeal, and even to understand what they contributed to the regenerative forces aroused by Pitt, has required the exercise of the historical imagination.

On the whole, these historical considerations seem favourable to the satirists and a justification of their indignation. Literal accuracy is not, of course, to be expected in satire, which, like caricature, presents a truth by means of a distortion. In satire, as in any art which aims to imitate nature under ideal conditions, the general ideas and qualities of mind of the artist command our real attention and determine our response. The mass of contemporaneous references in the work of the Tory satirists, with the subsidiary question of their faithfulness to fact, must not be allowed to obscure the permanent values enveloped in the tissue of particulars. The satire of this group, taken as a whole, reflects the general views of life held by all its members. They were not content with attacking moral and political corruption merely on the superficial level of fashions or manners or passing social conditions. They would not 'sodder and patch up the flaws and imperfections of nature'. Basically, they were opposed to the sect, to be met with in all ages, which holds that the evil in the world is not in men, but between them. They probed for its origin in the recesses of human nature; they cut

[1] *Essay on Pope* (1782), ii. 357. Warton adds a note: 'We cannot ascribe these successes, as M. de Voltaire does, to the effects of *Brown's Estimate*.'

Irish missionaries. The advent of Christianity and the beginnings of English literature are intimately connected, for the missionary and the Roman alphabet travelled together, and it was owing to the Christian scribe that the songs and sagas, the laws and customs, the faith and the proverbial wisdom of our forefathers, were first recorded and preserved. It is, indeed, difficult to realise that, before the conversion of the English to Christianity, during the sixth and seventh centuries, the whole, or, at all events, by far the greater part, of the intellectual wealth of the nation was to be sought on the lips of the people, or in the retentive memory of the individual, and was handed down from generation to generation by means of song and recitation. Caesar relates[1] how this was the case in Gaul, where the accumulated wisdom of the Druids, their religion and their laws, were transmitted by oral tradition alone, since they were forbidden to put any part of their lore into writing, although, for other purposes, the Greek alphabet was used. What wonder if the young Gauls who served their apprenticeship to the Druids had, as Caesar says, to learn "a great number of verses," and often to stay as long as twenty years before they had exhausted their instructors' store of learning.

Before entering, however, on the history of the Irish alphabet in England, it may be of interest to note that an even earlier attempt had been made to introduce Roman characters among the English. This was due to the efforts of Augustine and his missionaries, who established a school of handwriting in the south of England, with Canterbury as a probable centre. A Psalter of about A.D. 700, now in the Cottonian collection of the British Museum, and a few early copies of charters constitute, however, the only evidence of its existence that survives. From these we learn that the type of alphabet taught was the Roman rustic capital, though of a somewhat modified local character. This paucity of records makes it seem likely that the school of the Roman missionaries had but a brief period of existence, and wholly failed to influence the native hand.

Not so, however, with the Irish school of writing in the north. The Irish alphabet was founded on the Roman half-uncial hand, manuscripts of this type having been brought over to Ireland by missionaries, perhaps during the fifth century. Owing to the isolated position of the island and the consequent absence of extraneous influence, a strongly characteristic national hand developed, which ran its uninterrupted course down to the late

[1] *De Bello Gallico*, VI, 14.

this unnatural Filth', Harris wrote, referring to the fourth book of *Gulliver's Travels*, 'let him turn for a moment to a *Spectator* of Addison, and observe the Philanthropy of that Classical writer.'[1] As no one writer is adequate to all the needs of literature or life, it may be equally appropriate to recommend the satirists as a complement and correction to the literature of philanthropy.

Mandeville, a tavern character whose malice sharpened his wit, was especially qualified to expose the weaknesses of what he disliked. He disliked the *Characteristics* of the third Earl of Shaftesbury, which presented a system of ethics not only contrary to his own, but, he maintained, contrary to the teachings of 'the generality of moralists and philosophers' up to that time. Shaftesbury, he said,

> imagines that men without any trouble or violence upon themselves may be naturally virtuous. He seems to require and expect goodness in his species, as we do a sweet taste in grapes and China oranges, of which, if any of them are sour, we boldly pronounce that they are not come to that perfection their nature is capable of. . . . His notions I confess are generous and refined; they are a high compliment to human-kind, and capable by the help of a little enthusiasm of inspiring us with the most noble sentiments concerning the dignity of our exalted nature. What a pity it is that they are not true![2]

Mandeville likewise turned his sarcasm on Steele:

> When the incomparable Sir Richard Steele, in the usual elegance of his easy style, dwells on the praises of his sublime species, and with all the embellishments of rhetoric sets forth the excellency of human nature, it is impossible not to be charmed with his happy turns of thought, and the politeness of his expresions. But tho' I have been often moved by the force of his eloquence, and ready to swallow the ingenious sophistry with pleasure, yet I could never be so serious, but reflecting on his artful encomiums I thought on the tricks made use of by the women that would teach children to be mannerly.[3]

These criticisms of Shaftesbury and Steele stem from Mandeville's materialistic system, but they have a value of their own as shrewd observations. Dr. Johnson, who of course abhorred any materialistic system, could say late in his life: 'I read Mandeville forty, or, I believe, fifty years ago. He did not puzzle me; he opened my eyes into real life very much.'

[1] Warton, *Essay on Pope* (1782), ii. 344–5.
[2] *Fable of the Bees*, ed. F. B. Kaye (1924), i. 323.
[3] Ibid. i. 52–3.

only traces of it left being the adoption by the foreign alphabets of the symbols ƿ, ȝ, þ (ð) to express the peculiarly English sounds for which they stood. The rune ƿ, however, fell into disuse about the beginning of the fourteenth century, its place having been taken by *uu* (*vv*) or *w*; while ð (th) occurs occasionally as late as the end of the same century. Of far superior vitality were þ and ȝ, the former bearing a charmed life throughout Middle English times, though, in the fifteenth century and later, þ often appeared in the degenerated form of *y*, while ȝ was retained in order to represent spirant sounds, afterwards denoted by *y* or *gh*.

During the late twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the history of English handwriting was practically that of the various Latin hands of the French school. The fifteenth century finally witnessed the dissolution of the medieval book-hand of the minuscule type, the many varieties of it being apparent in the types used by the early printers. The legal or charter-hand, introduced with the Conquest, was, however, not superseded by the printing-presses, but ran an undisturbed though ever varying course down to the seventeenth century, when its place was taken by the modern current hand, fashioned on Italian models. A late variety still lingers on, however, in the so-called chancery-hand seen in the engraved writing of enrolments and patents.

Turning to the materials used for writing in medieval England, we gain at once a connecting link with the runic alphabet, since the wooden tablet, the *bóc*, again appears, though in a somewhat different fashion. A thin coating of wax was now spread over the surface, and the writing was scratched on it with a pointed instrument of metal or bone which, in Old English, was known as *græf* and, in the later centuries, by the French term *poyntel*. The use of these tablets was widely spread in the Middle Ages; they served for the school-boy's exercises and for bills and memoranda of every description, for short letters and rough copies—for anything that was afterwards to be copied out, more carefully, on vellum. In German illuminated MSS poets are represented as writing their songs and poems on waxen tablets, and, as early as the sixth century, *The Rule of St Benet* makes provision for the distribution of tablets and styles to monks. There is, also, evidence of the use of these tablets by Irish monks, who, it may be supposed, would introduce them to their English pupils. And, consequently, we find that Aldhelm, who died in 709, writes a riddle of which the answer is "tablet"—a fact which presupposes a knowledge of the existence of tablets among his contemporaries. Again, in

between men of this cast of mind and the satirists. When Thomas Tickell, Addison's friend and biographer, had newly arrived in Dublin as under-secretary and had established himself on a friendly footing with Swift, he ventured to inquire regarding the manuscript of an 'imaginary treatise' of which he had heard. But Swift declined to favour him, saying that *Gulliver's Travels* would not please Tickell, 'chiefly because they wholly disagree with your notions of persons and things'.[1]

Through all the ages there has been this opposition of the tough-minded and the tender-minded—William James's classification of philosophies and philosophers. In the eighteenth century it was the tender-minded who were gaining in popularity and were controlling the new literary modes. They were the party of the moderns, and until recently they have prescribed the tone of most of the criticism of the satirists. But the tough-minded also, in their way, have a claim to the title of friend of man. They warn against the illusions which not only end in bitterness but corrupt the heart in the process. They provide a discipline in looking steadily at the stark truth. In September 1725, shortly before Swift penned the famous letter to Pope about the philosophy of *Gulliver's Travels*, he was busy assisting and advising the mercurial Thomas Sheridan, who was in trouble over a politically imprudent sermon and had been removed from the Viceroy's list of chaplains. Swift interceded with Tickell, to whom he explained that Sheridan, 'as he is a creature without cunning, so he hath not overmuch advertency'. To the naïve Sheridan himself he gave this advice: 'You should think and deal with every man as a villain, without calling him so, or flying from him, or valuing him less. This is an old true lesson.'[2] There appears the paradox of Swift's misanthropy, and perhaps it is the paradox also of Pope's portrait of Atticus, where, to use the words of Wotton, 'grief is forced to laugh against her will'. For all his perspicacity into the nature of 'that animal called man', Swift heartily loved individuals, and did not value them less because he had to speak to them with candour.

The tough-minded have always produced realistic literature, sometimes certainly very unpleasant. The Tory satirists shared the temper and ideals of the great French classical

[1] Swift to Tickell, 7 July 1726.
[2] Swift to Sheridan, 11 Sept. 1725.

who, apparently, taught their art to the Arabs, since paper was exported by that nation at an early date. In the twelfth century, paper was known in Spain and Italy, and thence it spread slowly northwards, though it did not come into more general use until the fourteenth century. In the fifteenth century, paper manuscripts were very frequent in England, as can be assumed from the great number still remaining in public and private libraries.

For writing, both on parchment and on paper, the quill was used, known in Old English times as *feðer*, in Middle English by the French term *penne*. The existence of the quill as an implement of writing is proved by one of the oldest Irish MSS, where St John the Evangelist is represented holding a quill in his hand. Again, Aldhelm has a riddle on *penna*, in the same way as he had one on the *tablet*. Other necessary implements for writing and preparing a MS were a lead for ruling margins and lines, a ruler, a pair of compasses, scissors, a puncher, an awl, a scraping-knife and, last, but not least, ink, which was usually kept in a horn, either held in the hand by the scribe, or placed in a specially provided hole in his desk. In Old English times it was known, from its colour, as *blaec*, but, after the Conquest, the French term *enque*, our modern English *ink*, was adopted. The terms *horne* and *ink-horne* are both found in old glossaries.

When the body of the text was finally ready, the sheets were passed to the corrector, who filled the office of the modern proof-reader, and from him to the rubricator, who inserted, in more or less elaborate designs, and in striking colours, the rubrics and initials for which space had been left by the scribe. The pieces of parchment were then passed to the binder, who, as a rule, placed four on each other and then folded them, the result being a quire of eight leaves or sixteen pages. The binding was generally strong and solid in character: leather was used for the back and wooden boards for the sides, which were usually covered with parchment or leather or velvet. Thus was established the form and fashion of the book as we know it, whether written or printed.

Beside the book-form, parchment was also made up into rolls, which were especially used for chronological writings and deeds of various kinds[1].

The men who wrote both roll and book, and to whose patience and devotion we owe much of our knowledge of the times gone by, were, at first, the monks themselves; it being held that copying, especially of devotional books, was a work pleasing to God and one

[1] Cf. the term "Master of the Rolls."

'WIT AND POETRY AND POPE': SOME OBSERVATIONS ON HIS IMAGERY

MAYNARD MACK

I

THE point of departure of this essay is the current and useful description of Pope's kind of poetry as a poetry of statement.[1] One advantage of this description is that it is general enough to apply to other poetry as well. It asks us to bear in mind—what the temper of our present sensibility often disposes us to forget—that all poetry is in some sense poetry of statement; that without statement neither the Metaphysical kind of poem, witty, intellectual, and definitive, nor the Romantic kind, fluid and as it were infinitive (to mention only two) could be articulated at all; and accordingly, that the project of discrimination we are engaged on here is one of degree and not of kind.

Still, the real merit of the phrase is that it can apply specifically to Pope: it can set the problem. On the one hand, Pope writes a poetry with striking prose affinities. It has the Augustan virtues of perspicuity and ease which, whatever their status in poetry, are among the distinguishing attributes of prose discourse. It utilizes the denotative emphasis of Augustan diction, its precision and conciseness; the logical emphasis inherent in couplet rhetoric, its parallelism and antithesis. And it honours a whole body of reticences, reserves, restraints, exemplified perhaps best in the term 'correctness', which tend to subdue and generalize its feeling and its wit. On the other hand, every reader of Pope is conscious of a host of qualities that look the other way. There is the kind of thing that Mr. Eliot is apparently glancing at when he says of Dryden's poetry that it states 'immensely'.[2] Or Mr. Tillotson, when he remarks in Pope a 'composite activity', 'a combination of simultaneous effects'.[3] Or what Mr. Leavis and Mr. Wimsatt have pointed to in saying

[1] The phrase probably owes its present currency to Mr. Mark Van Doren's use of it in his study of *The Poetry of John Dryden* (1920; republished in 1931 and 1946).

[2] T. S. Eliot, 'John Dryden', 1922 (*Selected Essays*, 1932, p. 273).

[3] G. Tillotson, *On the Poetry of Pope* (1938), pp. 156, 141. Cf. also his *Essays in Criticism* (1942), p. 103.

CHAPTER III

EARLY NATIONAL POETRY

The poetry of the Old English period is generally grouped in two main divisions, national and Christian. To the former are assigned those poems of which the subjects are drawn from English, or rather Teutonic, tradition and history or from the customs and conditions of English life; to the latter those which deal with Biblical matter, ecclesiastical traditions and religious subjects of definitely Christian origin. The line of demarcation is not, of course, absolutely fixed. Most of the national poems in their present form contain Christian elements, while English influence often makes itself felt in the presentation of Biblical or ecclesiastical subjects. But, on the whole, the division is a satisfactory one, in spite of the fact that there are a certain number of poems as to the classification of which some doubt may be entertained.

We are concerned here only with the earlier national poems. With one or two possible exceptions they are anonymous, and we have no means of assigning to them with certainty even an approximate date. There can be little doubt, however, that they all belong to times anterior to the unification of England under king Alfred (A.D. 886). The later national poetry does not begin until the reign of Aethelstan.

With regard to the general characteristics of these poems one or two preliminary remarks will not be out of place. First, there is some reason for believing that, for the most part, they are the work of minstrels rather than of literary men. In two cases, *Widsith* and *Deor*, we have definite statements to this effect, and from Bede's account of Caedmon we may probably infer that the early Christian poems had a similar origin. Indeed, it is by no means clear that any of the poems were written down very early. Scarcely any of the MSS date from before the tenth century and, though they are doubtless copies, they do not betray traces of very archaic orthography. Again, it is probable that the authors were, as a rule, attached to the courts of kings or, at all events, to the retinues of

simplicities without which (as he probably agreed with Swift) 'no human Performance can arrive to any great Perfection'.[1] My purpose here is therefore to indicate some of the general principles that govern the effect of metaphor in Pope's poetry and then proceed to several of his characteristic methods of obtaining the benefits of metaphor without being, in any of the ordinary senses, strikingly metaphoric.

II

Probably the best place to begin an examination of this kind is with a passage from Pope's *Elegy on the Death of an Unfortunate Lady*, which has often been cited as evidence of his belonging to the Metaphysical 'line of wit':

> Most souls, 'tis true, but peep out once an age,
> Dull sullen pris'ners in the body's cage:
> Dim lights of life that burn a length of years,
> Useless, unseen, as lamps in sepulchres;
> Like Eastern kings a lazy state they keep,
> And close confin'd to their own palace sleep.[2]

The general affinities of these lines with Metaphysical poetry certainly need no emphasis, and the opening metaphor, at least, can be traced back through Dryden's

> imprison'd in so sweet a cage
> A soul might well be pleas'd to pass an age[3]

to Donne's

> She, whose faire body no such prison was
> But that a Soule might well be pleas'd to passe
> An age in her.[4]

Since we are looking for differences, however, we must not fail to notice that Pope rarely uses these extensive collocations of witty and ingenious images, and that when he does, it is almost always to establish something that his poems intend to disvalue—here a death-in-life theme, contrasting with a life-in-death theme built up around the lady. In consequence, only certain areas in Pope's poetry show the type of imagery that

[1] *A Letter to a Young Clergyman*, 1721 (*Wks.*, ed. Herbert Davis, ix. 68).
[2] Ll. 17–22. This passage is cited for its metaphysical character by Middleton Murry, *Countries of the Mind* (1922), p. 66, and F. R. Leavis, op. cit., pp. 70 ff.
[3] *To the Duchess of Ormond*, ll. 118–19.
[4] *The Second Anniversary*, ll. 221–3.

contains nothing which can properly be called epic. It cannot, therefore, be determined with certainty, whether the epos was known to the English before the invasion or whether it arose in this country, or, again, whether it was introduced from abroad in later times. Yet the fact is worth noting that all the poems of which we have any remains deal with stories relating to continental or Scandinavian lands. Indeed, in the whole of our early national poetry, there is no reference to persons who are known to have lived in Britain. Kögel put forward the view that epic poetry originated among the Goths, and that its appearance in the north-west of Europe is to be traced to the harpist who was sent to Clovis by Theodric, king of the Ostrogoths. Yet the traditions preserved in our poems speak of professional minstrels before the time of Clovis. The explanation of the incident referred to may be merely that minstrelsy had attained greater perfection among the Goths than elsewhere. Unfortunately Gothic poetry has wholly perished.

Although definite evidence is wanting, it is commonly held that the old Teutonic poetry was entirely strophic. Such is the case with all the extant Old Norse poems, and there is no reason for thinking that any other form of poetry was known in the north. Moreover, in two of the earliest Old English poems, *Widsith* and *Deor*, the strophes may be restored practically without alteration of the text. An attempt has even been made to reconstruct *Beowulf* in strophic form; but this can only be carried out by dealing with the text in a somewhat arbitrary manner. In *Beowulf*, as indeed in most Old English poems, new sentences and even new subjects begin very frequently in the middle of the verse. The effect of this is, of course, to produce a continuous metrical narrative, which is essentially foreign to the strophic type of poetry. Further, it is not to be overlooked that all the strophic poems which we possess are quite short. Even *Atlamál*, the longest narrative poem in the *Edda*, scarcely reaches one eighth of the length of *Beowulf*. According to another theory epics were derived from strophic lays, though never actually composed in strophic form themselves. This theory is, of course, by no means open to such serious objections. It may be noted that, in some of the earliest Old Norse poems, *e.g. Helgakviða Hundingsbana* II. and *Helgakviða Hiörvarðssonar*, the strophes contain only speeches, while the connecting narrative is given, quite briefly, in prose. Such pieces might very well serve as the bases of epic poems. The greater length of the latter may, then, be accounted for by the

associations. Pope's images, as suggested above, rely heavily on such associations. They take the ordinary established relationships of, say, singing and breath and soul, flesh and oblivion and marble, sepulchre and decay, finger and flute, parent and child, body and beauty, and with a delicate readjustment, freshen and fortify their implications:

> Oft as the mounting larks their notes prepare
> They fall, and leave their little lives in air.
>
> Tho' cold like you, unmov'd and silent grown,
> I have not yet forgot myself to stone.
>
> See the sad waste of all-devouring years,
> How Rome her own sad sepulchre appears.
>
> Such were the notes thy once-lov'd poet sung,
> Till death untimely stopp'd his tuneful tongue.[1]
>
> Me, let the tender Office long engage
> To rock the Cradle of reposing Age.
>
> Still round and round the ghosts of beauty glide,
> And haunt the places where their honour died.[2]

Finally, we must notice that the closed couplet exercises on images a peculiarly muting or subordinating influence. When we look at Dryden's lines quoted earlier, we see that, though he has taken over in large part the very words of Donne, the image in his verse has somehow become submerged. The reason, I think, is partly that Donne has sprawled the image across a weak rhyme which calls no attention to itself, whereas Dryden has suspended it within a strong rhyme which has a meaning of its own—which suggests, in fact, a correspondence between the soul's envelopment in body and its envelopment in time. Partly, also, that the movement of Donne's lines (and this is customary in his couplet poetry) exists simply to carry the image on its back; its pattern, in so far as it has any, is determined by and coextensive with the image. Dryden's

[1] This example illustrates particularly well the way in which an unbroken logical surface can cushion and absorb a powerful or even violent image. If we were to paraphrase the image, we should have to say something like: 'Death took up the instrument of Parnell's music, and fingering (stopping) it in his own (untimely) tempo, brought the music to a premature (untimely) stop.' Yet the effect of the normal logical meaning of 'stopp'd' is to carry us smoothly across the opposites that are being yoked here.

[2] The quotations are from *Windsor Forest*, ll. 133–4; *Eloisa to Abelard*, ll. 23–4; *To Mr. Addison*, ll. 1–2; *To Robert, Earl of Oxford*, ll. 1–2; *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, ll. 408–9; and *Moral Essays*, ii. 241–2.

monster takes to flight, mortally wounded (ll. 665—833). Beowulf displays the arm, and the Danes come to express their admiration of his achievement. They tell stories of heroes of the past, of Sigemund and his nephew Fitela and of the Danish prince Heremod[1]. Then Hrothgar himself arrives, congratulates Beowulf on his victory and rewards him with rich gifts (ll. 834—1062). During the feast which follows, the king's minstrel recites the story of Hnaef and Finn (ll. 1063—1159), to which we shall have to return later. The queen comes forward and, after addressing Hrothgar together with his nephew and colleague Hrothwulf, thanks Beowulf and presents him with a valuable necklace (ll. 1160—1232). This necklace, it is stated (ll. 1202—1214), was afterwards worn by Hygelac and fell into the hands of the Franks at his death. Hrothgar and Beowulf now retire, but a number of knights settle down to sleep in the hall. During the night Grendel's mother appears and carries off Aeschere, the king's chief councillor (ll. 1233—1306). Beowulf is summoned and the king, overwhelmed with grief, tells him what has happened and describes the place where the monsters were believed to dwell. Beowulf promises to exact vengeance (ll. 1306—1396). They set out for the place, a pool overshadowed with trees, but apparently connected with the sea. Beowulf plunges into the water and reaches a cave, where he has a desperate encounter with the monster. Eventually he succeeds in killing her with a sword which he finds in the cave. He then comes upon the corpse of Grendel and cuts off its head. With this he returns to his companions, who had given him up for lost (ll. 1397—1631). The head is brought in triumph to the palace, and Beowulf describes his adventure. The king praises his exploit and contrasts his spirit with that of the unfortunate prince Heremod. From this he passes to a moralising discourse on the evils of pride (1632—1784). On the following day Beowulf bids farewell to the king. They part affectionately, and the king rewards him with further gifts. Beowulf and his companions embark and return to their own land (1785—1921). The virtues of Hygd, the young wife of Hygelac, are praised, and she is contrasted with Thrytho, the wife of Offa, who, in her youth, had displayed a murderous disposition (ll. 1922—1962). Beowulf greets Hygelac and gives him an account of his adventures. Part of his speech, however, is taken up with a subject which, except for a casual reference in ll. 83—85, has not been mentioned before,

[1] For these persons cf. the Old Norse poem *Hyndluljóð*, strophe 2, *Völsunga Saga* cap. 7—10, etc.

drama of the ladies' arrival, which the verse itself is at some pains to enact in the first two and a half lines. Then there is the confrontation of forces in line 3, and the double assessment of the booty in line 4, both again rhetorically enacted. Finally, in line 5 comes a brilliant chiastic *rapprochement* of male and female in their bedizenment, to be followed in line 6 by an extension and also a qualification of this *rapprochement* with respect to sex (both parties are interested in the amorous duel, but their functions differ), the former carried by the metrical parallel, the latter by the antithesis in the sense. All these effects grow out of the potentialities of couplet rhetoric, not out of the image; and though they may co-operate with imagery, as here, they have a life of their own which tends to mute it.[1]

III

So far we have been discussing orthodox kinds of imagery in Pope's poetry, together with some of the modifications to which this imagery is subjected. It is time to turn now to some of his more reticent modes of imaging, which achieve metaphorical effect without using what it is customary to regard as metaphor. The first of these may be studied in his proper names.

Pope's names warrant an essay in themselves. With the possible exception of Milton, no poet has woven so many so happily into verse. And this is not simply because, as Pope said of himself,

> Whoe'er offends, at some unlucky Time,
> Slides into Verse, and hitches in a Rhyme,[2]

but because Pope saw, like Milton, the qualitative elements (including in Pope's case the humorous qualities) that could be extracted from proper names. For an effect of romance, sonority, and exoticism akin to Milton's, though much mitigated by the couplet, any passage of his translation of Homer's catalogue of ships will do:

> The Paphlagonians Pylaemenes rules,
> Where rich Henetia breeds her savage Mules,
> Where Erythinus' rising Clifts are seen,
> Thy Groves of Box, Cytorus! ever green;

[1] See also on this point, with respect to Dryden, M. W. Prior, *The Language of Tragedy* (1947), p. 169.

[2] *Imit. of Hor., Sat. II*, i, ll. 77–8.

armour and necklace and then dies (ll. 2709—2842). The cowardly knights now return and are bitterly upbraided by Wiglaf (ll. 2842—2891). A messenger brings the news to the warriors who have been waiting behind. He goes on to prophesy that, now their heroic king has fallen, the Geatas must expect hostility on all sides. With the Franks there has been no peace since Hygelac's unfortunate expedition against the Frisians and Hetware, while the Swedes cannot forget Ongentheow's disaster, which is now described at length. The warriors approach the barrow and inspect the treasure which has been found (ll. 2891—3075). Wiglaf repeats Beowulf's instructions, the dragon is thrown into the sea and the king's body burnt on a great pyre. Then a huge barrow is constructed over the remains of the pyre, and all the treasure taken from the dragon's lair is placed in it. The poem ends with an account of the mourning and the proclamation of the king's virtues by twelve warriors who ride round the barrow.

Many of the persons and events mentioned in *Beowulf* are known to us also from various Scandinavian records, especially Saxo's *Danish History*, *Hrólfs Saga Kraka*, *Ynglinga Saga* (with the poem *Ynglingatal*) and the fragments of the lost *Skiöldunga Saga*. Scyld, the ancestor of the Scyldungas (the Danish royal family), clearly corresponds to Skiöldr, the ancestor of the Skiöldungar, though the story told of him in *Beowulf* does not occur in Scandinavian literature. Healfdene and his sons Hrothgar and Halga are certainly identical with the Danish king Halfdan and his sons Hróarr (Roe) and Helgi; and there can be no doubt that Hrothwulf, Hrothgar's nephew and colleague, is the famous Hrólfr Kraki, the son of Helgi. Hrothgar's elder brother Heorogar is unknown, but his son Heoroweard may be identical with Hiörvarðr, the brother-in-law of Hrólfr. It has been plausibly suggested also that Hrethric, the son of Hrothgar, may be the same person as Hroerekr (Roricus), who is generally represented as the son or successor of Ingialdr. The name of the Heathobeardan is unknown in the north, unless, possibly, a reminiscence of it is preserved in Saxo's Hothbroddus, the name of the king who slew Roe. Their princes Froda and Ingeld, however, clearly correspond to Fróði (Frotho IV) and his son Ingialdr, who are represented as kings of the Danes. Even the story of the old warrior who incites Ingeld to revenge is given also by Saxo; indeed, the speaker (Starcatherus) is one of the most prominent figures in his history. Again, the Swedish prince Eadgils, the son of Ohthere, is certainly identical with the famous king of the Svear, Aðils, the son of

Adonis driving to St. James's a whole herd of swine;[1] or personified Morality, Chicane, Casuistry, and Dulness suddenly brought into incongruous union with a judge named Page:

> Morality, by her false Guardians drawn,
> Chicane in Furs, and Casuistry in Lawn,
> Gasps, as they straiten at each end the cord,
> And dies, when Dulness gives her Page the word.[2]

Unquestionably, however, Pope's best metaphorical effects with names were obtained from specific ones, as in the lines on Dennis and Dissonance above. Did a certain duchess show an indiscriminate appetite for men? How better image it than with a nice derangement of proper names, opened with a particularly felicitous 'what':

> What has not fired her bosom or her brain?
> Caesar and Tall-boy, Charles, and Charlemagne.[3]

Did the vein of poetry in contemporary versifiers hardly weigh up to a gramme? Then doubtless it was an age when

> nine such Poets made a Tate.[4]

Why was philosophy at Oxford so backward, so ponderous? Because the Oxford logicians came riding whip and spur, through thin and thick,

> On German Crousaz and Dutch Burgersdyck.[5]

Or, since the current drama was slavishly derivative, why not let the patchwork image be projected partly with syntax and partly with names—a roll-call of stately ones, a tumbling huddle of risible ones:

> A past, vamp'd, future, old reviv'd, new piece,
> Twixt Plautus, Fletcher, Shakespeare, and Corneille
> Can make a Cibber, Tibbald, or Ozell.[6]

A second restrained mode of imaging in Pope's poetry is the allusion. Not simply the kind of descriptive allusion to persons, places, events, and characters that all poets make continual use of, and of which I shall say nothing here, but a kind that is specifically evaluative, constructing its image by setting beside some present object or situation not so much another object or situation as another dimension, a different sphere—frequently

[1] *Moral Essays*, iii., 73–4.
[2] *Dunciad* (1743), iv. 27–30.
[3] *Moral Essays*, ii. 77–8.
[4] *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, l. 190.
[5] *Dunciad* (1743), iv. 198.
[6] Ibid. i. 284–6.

Scandinavia, speaks of the Götar (Gautoi) as a very numerous nation.

The hero himself still remains to be discussed. On the whole, though the identification is rejected by many scholars, there seems to be good reason for believing that he was the same person as Böðvarr Biarki, the chief of Hrólfr Kraki's knights. In *Hrólfs Saga Kraka*, Biarki is represented as coming to Leire, the Danish royal residence, from Götaland, where his brother was king. Shortly after his arrival he killed an animal demon (a bear, according to Saxo), which was in the habit of attacking the king's farmyard at Yule. Again, according to *Skaldskaparmál*, cap. 44 (from *Skiöldunga Saga*), he took part with Aðils in the battle against Áli. In all these points his history resembles that of Beowulf. It appears from *Hrólfs Saga Kraka* that Biarki had the faculty of changing into a bear. And Beowulf's method of fighting, especially in his conflict with Daeghrefn, may point to a similar story. On the other hand, the latter part of Biarki's career is quite different from that of Beowulf. He stayed with Hrólfr to the end and shared the death of that king. But the latter part of Beowulf's life can hardly be regarded as historical. Indeed, his own exploits throughout are largely of a miraculous character.

There is another Scandinavian story, however, which has a very curious bearing on the earlier adventures of Beowulf. This is a passage in *Grettis Saga* (cap. 64 ff.), in which the hero is represented as destroying two demons, male and female. The scene is laid in Iceland; yet so close are the resemblances between the two stories, in the character of the demons, in the description of the places they inhabit and in the methods by which the hero deals with them, as well as in a number of minor details, that it is impossible to ascribe them to accident. Now Grettir seems to be a historical person who died about the year 1031. The presumption is, then, that an older story has become attached to his name. But there is nothing in the account that gives any colour to the idea that it is actually derived from the Old English poem. More probably the origin of both stories alike is to be sought in a folktale, and, just as the adventures were attributed in Iceland to the historical Grettir, so in England, and, possibly, also in Denmark, at an earlier date they were associated with a historical prince of the Götar. From the occurrence of the local names *Beowanham* and *Grendles mere* in a Wiltshire charter[1] some scholars have inferred that the story was originally told of a certain Beowa, whom the

[1] Kemble, *Cod Dipl.* 353.

These colours are darker:

Each does but hate his neighbour as himself.[1]
What Lady's Face is not a whited Wall?[2]

And this, though light in tone, carries a scathing indictment of the perversion of religious values in a money culture. Since it admirably illustrates the way allusion can construct a cogent metaphor without intruding on a casual surface and is, in fact, one of the most scarifying passages Pope ever wrote, I quote it in full:

On some, a *Priest* succinct in Amice white,
Attends; *all flesh is nothing in his Sight*!
Beeves, at his touch, at once to jelly *turn*,
And the huge Boar is shrunk into an *Urn*:
The board with specious *miracles* he loads,
Turns Hares to Larks, and Pigeons into Toads.
Another (for in all what one can shine?)
Explains the Seve and Verdeur of the *Vine*.
What cannot copious *Sacrifice attone*?
Thy Treufles, Perigord! thy Hams, Bayonne!
With French *Libation*, and Italian Strain
Wash Bladen *white*, and *expiate* Hays's stain.
Knight lifts the head, for what are crowds undone
To *three essential* Partridges *in one*?[3]

There are two other modes of imagery of which Pope is fond, modes that the concision of the closed couplet encourages and almost insists on, though no other writer of the couplet has perfected them to a like extent. These are pun and juxtaposition. Juxtaposition operates in Pope's poetry in several ways. One of them, as has lately been pointed out,[4] is through zeugma, which the economy of this verse form often calls for and which can itself be modulated either into metaphor—'Or stain her Honour, or her new Brocade', or into pun—'And sometimes Counsel take—and sometimes *Tea*.'[5] (In either case, the effect is ultimately metaphorical, a correspondence being suggested

[1] *Moral Essays*, iii. 108. Cf. Matt. xxii. 39. I have noticed this allusion elsewhere (*College English* (1946), vii. 269).

[2] *The Fourth Satire of Dr. John Donne, Versifyed*, l. 151. Cf. Matt. xxiii. 27. (The allusion is Pope's addition.)

[3] *Dunciad* (1743), iv. 549–62. (Italics mine.)

[4] In Mr. Wimsatt's essay cited above, p. 21, n. 1. Cf. also Austin Warren, 'The Mask of Pope' (*Rage for Order*, 1948, p. 45).

[5] *Rape of the Lock*, ii. 107, iii. 8.

the part of the poem dealing with Beowulf's reception by Hygelac may also have originally formed the subject of a separate lay. Some scholars have gone much further than this in their analysis of the poem. According to one view nearly half of it is the work of interpolators; according to another the present text is a composite one made up from two parallel versions. It is much to be doubted, however, whether any really substantial result has been obtained from these investigations into the "inner history" of the poem. The references to religion seem to afford the only safe criterion for distinguishing between earlier and later elements. Thus, it is worth noting that in ll. 175 ff. the Danes are represented as offering heathen sacrifices, a passage which is wholly inconsistent with the sentiments afterwards attributed to Hrothgar. But at what stage in the history of the poem was the Christian element introduced?

Certainly this element seems to be too deeply interwoven in the text for us to suppose that it is due to additions made by scribes at a time when the poem had come to be written down. Indeed, there is little evidence for any additions or changes of this kind. We must ascribe it, then, either to the original poet or poets or to minstrels by whom the poem was recited in later times. The extent to which the Christian element is present varies somewhat in different parts of the poem. In the last portion (ll. 2200—3183) the number of lines affected by it amounts to less than four per cent., while in the section dealing with Beowulf's return (ll. 1904—2199) it is negligible. In the earlier portions, on the other hand, the percentage rises to between nine and ten, but this is partly due to four long passages. One fact worth observing is that the Christian element is about equally distributed between the speeches and the narrative. We have noticed above that, according to a theory which has much in its favour, epics are derived from "mixed" pieces, in which speeches were given in verse and narrative in prose. If Christian influence had made itself felt at this stage, we should surely have expected to find it more prominent in the narrative than in the speeches, for the latter would, presumably, be far less liable to change.

There is one curious feature in the poem which has scarcely received sufficient attention, namely the fact that, while the poet's reflections and even the sentiments attributed to the various speakers are largely, though not entirely, Christian, the customs and ceremonies described are, almost without exception, heathen. This fact seems to point, not to a Christian work with heathen

And sometimes a set of puns, as in this example, fusing the biologist with the object of his study:

> The most recluse, discreetly open'd, find
> Congenial matter in the Cockle-kind.[1]

Pun, of course, brings before us Pope's most prolific source of imagery in his comic and satiric poetry—which is to say, in the bulk of his work. His puns in other poems—*Windsor Forest*, *Eloisa*, the *Essay on Man*, the *Essay on Criticism*—are deeply buried and always reticent. But in the satires and the *Dunciad*, particularly the latter, he spends them openly and recklessly, with superb effect. They cease to be in these poems ordinary puns, like those we find in Metaphysical poetry, where, because of the conceit, pun has a lesser job to do; they become instead Metaphysical conceits themselves, yoking together violently, as Mr. Leavis has noticed,[2] the most heterogeneous ideas. Moreover, when they are used together with ordinary images, the real metaphorical power is likely to be lodged in them. Thus the following figures are not especially bold themselves, but the puns inside them open out like peacocks' tails:

> Ye tinsel Insects! whom a Court maintains,
> That counts your Beauties only by your *Stains*.
>
> On others Int'rest her gay liv'ry flings,
> Int'rest that waves on *Party-colour'd* wings.
>
> At length Corruption, like a gen'ral flood,
> (So long by watchful ministers withstood)
> Shall deluge all; and Av'rice, creeping on,
> Spread like a *low-born* mist, and blot the sun.[3]

Here, then, are four classes of metaphorical effect in Pope's poetry, all of them obtained outside the normal channels of overt simile and metaphor. One of them, juxtaposition (its collateral descendant, zeugma, would make a second), stems from the structure of the closed couplet itself. Two more, allusion and pun, are encouraged to a large extent by its fixed and narrow room. And none of them, it is important to notice, calls attention to itself as metaphorical. Between them, nevertheless, without violating at all the prose conventions of the Augustan mode, they do a good deal of the work that we to-day associate with the extended metaphor and conceit.

[1] *Dunciad* (1743), iv. 447–8.
[2] Op. cit., p. 99.
[3] From *Epil. to the Sats.*, Dial. ii. 220–1; *Dunciad* (1743), iv. 537–8; and *Moral Essays*, iii. 135–8. (Italics mine.)

is sadly defective. The MS is lost and the text, as given by Hickes, is extremely corrupt. The story, however, though obscure to us, must have been extremely popular in early times. It is the subject of a long episode in *Beowulf* (see above, p. 23), and three of the chief characters are mentioned in *Widsith*. Familiarity with it is shown also by a mistake in the genealogy in the *Historia Brittonum*, § 31.

The fragment opens with the speech of a young prince rousing his followers to defend the hall in which they are sleeping, apparently within Finn's fortress. They rush to the doors, the chief men being Hengest (perhaps the prince), Sigeferth, Eaha, Ordlaf and Guthlaf. A short altercation follows between Sigeferth and Garulf, who is apparently one of the attacking force. The battle goes on for five days, and many of the assailants, including Garulf, fall. The defenders, however, maintain their position without loss, and we are told that never was a better recompense yielded by sixty knights to their lord than Hnaef now received from his followers. Then a wounded warrior, who is not named, brings the news to his king—at which point the fragment breaks off.

The episode in *Beowulf* furnishes us with considerably more information than the fragment itself. Hnaef, a vassal of the Danish king Healfdene, has fallen at the hands of the Frisians, whom apparently he had gone to visit—whether as friend or foe is not clear. His men, however, maintain a stout defence, and so great are the losses of the Frisians that their king, Finn, has to make terms with them. An agreement is then arrived at between their leader Hengest and the king. They are to enter Finn's service and to be treated by him as generously as the Frisians themselves; and no taunt is to be raised against them on the ground that they have made terms with the man who slew their lord. A great funeral pyre is constructed for the bodies of the slain, and Hildeburh, apparently the wife of Finn and sister of Hnaef, bewails the loss of both her brother and her son. Hengest and his companions stay with Finn throughout the winter, though sorely tempted to exact vengeance. Eventually, Guthlaf and Oslaf (Ordlaf?) attack and slay Finn with many of his men. The queen is carried away to Denmark with much treasure.

There are no certain references to this story in Scandinavian or German literature, though Ordlaf and Guthlaf are probably to be identified with two Danish princes mentioned in Arngrim

particularities (what is meant); a translation that profuse or striking imagery only clutters and impedes. And in the second place, because the success of the medium depends on adopting the attitudes, motives, and so far as possible even the terms of a very conventional point of view. If one is going to write an ironic love song 'in the modern taste', one almost has to refer to 'Cupid's purple pinions'[1]; or if a panegyric on George II, to the usual terms for kingly prowess:

> Your Country, chief, in Arms abroad defend.[2]

To find a more striking phrase would destroy the subtlety of the ironic comment (i.e. its resemblance to what a Cibber might have said); and would, of course, too, destroy the mutual translation between the arms of battle and those of Madame Walmoden.

To all this, in the *Epistle to Augustus*, is added the further layer of metaphor that results from Pope's imitation of what Horace had written about *his* Caesar. Nor is this layer confined alone to the poems which are imitations. The Roman background, it has been well observed, is a kind of universal Augustan metaphor or 'myth'.[3] It lies behind Pope's work, and much of Swift's and Fielding's, like a charged magnetic field, a reservoir of attitudes whose energy can be released into their own creations at a touch. Not through the Horatian or Virgilian or Ovidian tags; these are only its minor aspect; but through the imposed standard of a mighty and civilized tradition in arts, morals, government. At the same time, conveniently, it is a standard that can be used two ways: for a paradigm of the great and good now lost in the corruptions of the present, as in the comparison of George II with Augustus Caesar; or for the headwaters of a stream down which still flow the stable and continuing classic values:

> You show us Rome was glorious, not profuse.
> The world's just wonder, and ev'n thine, O Rome!
> Who would not weep, if Atticus were he![4]

This last example brings us to Pope's portraits. These, again, have the complicating characteristics of metaphors, without

[1] Cf. Swift's *A Love Song, in the Modern Taste*, st. 1.
[2] *Imit. of Hor.*, *Ep. II*, i, l. 3.
[3] Cf. J. C. Maxwell, 'Demigods and Pickpockets', *Scrutiny*, xi (1942–3), 34 ff.
[4] From *Moral Essays*, iv. 23; *Essay on Criticism*, l. 248; *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, l. 214.

of the gold they were carrying and determined to secure it. Accompanied by Hagano and eleven other picked warriors, he overtook them as they rested in a cave in the Vosges. Waltharius offered him a large share of the gold in order to obtain peace; but the king demanded the whole together with Hiltgund and the horse. Stimulated by the promise of great rewards, the eleven warriors now attacked Waltharius one after another, but he slew them all. Hagano had tried to dissuade Guntharius from the attack; but now, since his nephew was among the slain, he formed a plan with the king for surprising Waltharius. On the following day they both fell upon him after he had quitted his stronghold, and, in the struggle that ensued, all three were maimed. Waltharius, however, was able to proceed on his way with Hiltgund, and the story ends happily with their marriage.

Both our fragments refer to the time immediately before the final encounter. The first is taken up with a speech, apparently by the lady, in which Waldhere is exhorted to acquit himself in the coming fight in a manner worthy of his former deeds. Guthhere has unjustly begun hostilities and refused the offer of a sword and treasure. Now he will have to go away empty-handed, if he does not lose his life. Between the two fragments probably not very much has been lost. The second is occupied by an altercation between Guthhere and Waldhere, in which the former praises his sword and the latter his coat of mail. Waldhere states that the king had tried to get Hagena to attack him first. Victory, however, comes to the faithful from above. Both the fragments contain Christian allusions.

It has been suggested that the Old English poem was a translation from an early German one; but the evidence adduced is far from satisfactory. The speeches given in the fragments have nothing corresponding to them in Ekkehard's text, and there is a noteworthy difference in the portraiture of the heroine's character. Probably, nothing more than the tradition was derived from abroad, and at a very early date, if we may judge from the form of the names.

In the fragments, Guthhere is represented as king of the Burgundians. Since there can be no doubt that he is the Burgundian king Gundicarius (Gundaharius) who was defeated and slain by the Huns about the year *437*, we must conclude that Ekkehard's nomenclature was affected by the political geography of his own day, when Worms was a Frankish town The other chief characters are known only from German ar'

in general seem to take on prominence according as both the tenor and the vehicle (viz. lovers as well as compasses) are insisted on at once. In any case, they behave like metaphors in Pope's poems, usually assuming, in addition to their functions locally, an important unifying role. Sometimes they define the entire structure of a poem, as in *Moral Essays*, ii, where they develop the easy-going aphorism of the opening—'Most women have no characters at all'—into a mature interpretation of what personality is. Sometimes they supply the central symbols, as with Timon in *Moral Essays*, iv, 'Vice' in Dialogue ii of the *Epilogue to the Satires*, or the Man of Ross and Balaam in *Moral Essays*, iii. Likewise, in *Arbuthnot*, Atticus and Sporus appear at just the crucial phases in the argument and knit up, as it were, the two essential ganglia in the sinews of the drama that the poem acts out between the poet and his adversaries. They give us, successively, the poet analytical and judicial, who can recognize the virtues of his opponents ('Blest with each Talent and each Art to please'), whose deliberation is such that he can even mirror in his language—its subjunctives, its antitheses, the way it hangs the portrait over an individual without identifying it with him—the tentative, insinuating, never-wholly-committed hollow man who is Atticus; and then the poet roused and righteous, no longer judicial but executive, touching with Ithuriel's spear the invader in the garden, spitting from his mouth (with a concentration of sibilants and labials) the withered apple-seed. Both portraits are essential to the drama that unifies the poem.

The great pervasive metaphor of Augustan literature, however, including Pope's poetry, is the metaphor of tone: the mock-heroic. It is very closely allied, of course, to the classical or Roman myth touched on earlier and is, like that, a reservoir of strength. By its means, without the use of overt imagery at all, opposite and discordant qualities may be locked together in 'a balance or reconcilement of sameness with difference, of the general with the concrete, the idea with the image, the individual with the representative, the sense of novelty and freshness with old and familiar objects'—the mock-heroic seems made on purpose to fit this definition of Coleridge's of the power of imagination. For a literature of decorums like the Augustan, it was a metaphor with every sort of value. It could be used in the large, as in *Joseph Andrews*, *Tom Jones*, *The*

of the gold they were carrying and determined to secure it. Accompanied by Hagano and eleven other picked warriors, he overtook them as they rested in a cave in the Vosges. Waltharius offered him a large share of the gold in order to obtain peace; but the king demanded the whole together with Hiltgund and the horse. Stimulated by the promise of great rewards, the eleven warriors now attacked Waltharius one after another, but he slew them all. Hagano had tried to dissuade Guntharius from the attack; but now, since his nephew was among the slain, he formed a plan with the king for surprising Waltharius. On the following day they both fell upon him after he had quitted his stronghold, and, in the struggle that ensued, all three were maimed. Waltharius, however, was able to proceed on his way with Hiltgund, and the story ends happily with their marriage.

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which the poem as a whole serves as vehicle for a tenor which is the decline of literary and human values generally; a network of local metaphor, in which this poem is especially prolific; and in between, the specifically mock-heroic metaphor which springs from holding the tone and often the circumstances of heroic poetry against the triviality of the dunces and their activities. But what is striking about this metaphor in the *Dunciad*, and indicative of its flexibility, is that it is applied quite differently from the way it is applied in the *Rape of the Lock*. There, the epic mode as vehicle either depresses the values of the actors, as with Belinda, or somewhat supports them, as with Clarissa. Here, on the contrary, one of the two lines of development (the comic) grows from allowing the actors to depress and degrade the heroic mode, its dignity and beauty. Again and again Pope builds up in the poem effects of striking epic richness, only to let them be broken down, disfigured, stained—as the word 'vomit' stains the lovely movement and suggestion of the epic line quoted above. Thus the diving and other games in Book II disfigure the idea of noble emulation and suggest the befoulment of heroic values through the befoulment of the words and activities in which these values are recorded. Thus the fop's Grand Tour in IV mutilates a classical and Renaissance ideal (cf. also Virgil's Aeneas, to whose destined wanderings toward Rome the fop's are likened) of wisdom ripened by commerce with men and cities. Indeed, the lines of the whole passage are balanced between the ideal and the fop's perversions of it:

> A dauntless infant! never scar'd with God.
> Europe he saw, and Europe saw him too.
> Judicious drank, and greatly daring dined;

or between related ideals and what has happened to them:

> To happy Convents, bosomed deep in Vines,
> Where slumber Abbots, purple as their Wines.

or between epic resonances, the epic names, and the sorry facts:

> To where the Seine, obsequious as she runs,
> Pours at great Bourbon's feet her silken sons.[1]

This is one line of development in the *Dunciad*. The other is its converse: the epic vehicle is gradually made throughout the poem to enlarge and give a status of serious menace to all this

[1] *Dunciad* (1743), iv. 284 ff.

treated by Guthhere, king of the Burgundians, and by Aelfwine (Alboin) in Italy[1]. In ll. 76—78 there is another interruption referring to the power of Casere, *i.e.* the Greek emperor. Then, in ll. 88 ff., the poet tells of the gifts he had received from Eormenric, from his lord Eadgils, prince of the Myrgingas and from Ealhhild, and also of his own skill as a *minstrel*. At l. 109, he begins an enumeration of the Gothic heroes he had visited, most of whom are known to us from Jordanes, *Völsunga Saga* (probably also *Hervarar Saga*), *Vilkina Saga* and German traditions. In ll. 119 ff. he speaks of the ceaseless warfare round the forest of the Vistula, when the Goths had to defend their country against the Huns. The list closes with a reference to the martial deeds of Wudga and Hama, who are mentioned also in *Waldhere* and *Beowulf* as well as in *Vilkina Saga*, the former also in many other continental authorities. The epilogue consists of a short reflection on the life of wandering minstrels and on the advantages gained by princes in treating them generously.

Apart from the introduction and epilogue, which may originally have been in prose, this poem appears to have been composed in strophic form. Its date cannot be determined with certainty. There is nothing, however, to prevent us from assigning it to the seventh century or even an earlier date; for, though a Christian element is present (ll. 15, 82—87, 131—134), it is very slight and may be removed without affecting the structure of the poem. Alboin, who died about 572, is, probably, the latest person mentioned. Now Ealhhild's father bears the same name (Eadwine) as Alboin's father, *i.e.* Audoin, king of the Langobardi, a fact which has led many scholars to believe that Ealhhild was Alboin's sister, and, consequently, that the poet lived towards the close of the sixth century. This hypothesis, however, involves, practically, the reconstruction of the whole poem; for the poet repeatedly speaks of his visits to Eormenric who, as we know from Ammianus Marcellinus (xxxi, 3. 1.), died about two centuries before Alboin, and clearly implies that Ealhhild was his contemporary, whereas he only once alludes to Alboin, in a passage covering five lines. The identity of the two names is, therefore, probably a mere coincidence. As a matter of fact, the heroes commemorated in the poem lived at wide intervals from one another, though Eormenric and persons apparently contemporary with him figure more prominently than the rest. With greater probability one might suppose that traditions existed of a famous minstrel

[1] *Cf.* Paulus Diaconus, *Hist. Lang.* I. 27.

V

The purpose of this essay has been to supply a few, a very few, of the materials that are requisite for giving the phrase 'poetry of statement' specific content. I have tried to suggest that Pope is poetic, but not in the way that the Metaphysicals are poetic, even where he is most like them; that if the prominent metaphor is the distinctive item in their practice, this has been replaced in Pope's poetry partly by devices of greater compression, like allusion and pun, partly by devices that are more distributive, like irony and mock-heroic, and of course by a multitude of other elements—the net effect of all these being to submerge the multiplicities of poetic language just beneath the singleness of prose. Twenty-five years ago it would have been equally important to say that Pope is not poetic as the Romantics are poetic, for in this century there has always been a tendency to subsume him as far as possible under the reigning orthodoxy. It is true that in certain areas Pope's poetry faintly resembles that of the Romantics; in certain others, that of the line of wit. But the task of criticism for the future, when we are likely to be paying more and more attention to Pope as our own poetry moves in the direction suggested by Mr. Auden, and by Mr. Eliot in his *Quartets*, is not with Pope as a pre-Romantic or a post-Metaphysical, but as an Augustan poet whose peculiar accomplishment, however we may choose to rate it on the ultimate scale of values, was the successful fusion of some of the most antithetical features of verse and prose.

saying that he did not take the character of Timon to himself (p. 55); and Cleland must have learned from Pope of Pope's friendship with the Vicar of Chiswick (p. 50), of his visits to Lord Burlington's neighbour at Chiswick (p. 49), and of his never having seen Walpole's place at Houghton (p. 55). In directing the defence, Pope must have ordered special attention to those points in the description of Timon's villa which did not correspond with what could be found at Canons, and he must have emphasized that Chandos's pictures were by Bellucci and Zeman and not by Verrio and Laguerre, a point which Pope himself made in a letter to Aaron Hill dated 5 February 1731/2. The distinction between composition and such detailed oversight is so slight that I feel justified in dropping the intermediary. I think that Pope wrote the 'Master Key' himself, and I feel the more confident in the attribution when I notice Pope anticipating the first use of his favourite *soubriquet* for Lord Hervey on page 46.

The *Epistle to Burlington* had appeared in print on or about 13 December 1731—it was advertised in the *Daily Post* as published that day. The earliest known attack in print appeared in Henley's *Hyp-Doctor* on 21 December; but although that was a mere eight days after the publication of the poem, other critics had already made enough noise to reach Pope's ears. On 21 December Pope wrote to Burlington from Twickenham saying that he had been confined at home for ten days by his mother's dangerous illness, and consequently he had 'never heard till two days since of a most Extravagant Censure w^ch^ they say y^e^ whole Town passes upon y^e^ Epistle I honourd myself in addressing to your L^d^ship, as if it were intended to expose the D. of Chandos. Either the whole Town then, or I, have lost our Senses; for nothing is so evident . . . as that Character of Timon is collected from twenty different Absurditys & Improprieties: & was never y^e^ Picture of any one Human Creature'. The following day Pope wrote to Hill in similar terms, denying that Timon was Chandos, and saying that it was but two days since he had heard of 'the uproar on this head'. 'Two days', if interpreted literally, would be enough

which covers some of the same ground as this article, and to which I am much indebted. I also wish to record my gratitude to Mr. Francis Thompson, the Duke of Devonshire's librarian, and to Dr. R. Wittkower, who have most generously advised me on a number of difficult points, and to Mr. Norman Ault and Mr. F. W. Bateson, who have made many useful suggestions.

oak, where she sits in solitude bewailing her troubles the whole day long. She has no friends at hand, and all the vows of lasting love which she and her husband had exchanged in time past have come to nothing.

The Husband's Message, so far as it can be read, is a much simpler poem; but, unfortunately, a number of letters have been lost in ll. 2—6 and 32—40 owing to a large rent in the MS. The poem is in the form of a speech addressed, apparently by means of a staff inscribed with runic letters, to a woman of royal rank. The speech is a message from the woman's husband (or possibly lover), who has had to leave his country in consequence of a vendetta. It is to the effect that he has succeeded in gaining for himself a position of wealth and dignity in another land. He now wishes to assure her that his devotion is unchanged, to remind her of the vows they had made in times past and to ask her to sail southwards to join him as soon as spring comes.

This is the gist of the poem as it appears in almost all editions. It has recently been pointed out, however, that the seventeen lines which immediately precede it in the MS and which have generally been regarded as a riddle—unconnected with the poem itself—seem really to form the beginning of the speech. In these lines the object speaking states that once it grew by the seashore, but that a knife and human skill have fitted it to give utterance to a message which requires to be delivered privately.

Again, more than one scholar has remarked that the poem looks very much like a sequel to *The Wife's Complaint*. Others have denied the connection between the two poems on the ground that in *The Wife's Complaint*, l. 15, the lady's imprisonment is attributed to the husband himself. But it should be observed that this passage is scarcely intelligible in its present form and, further, that it seems to conflict with what is said elsewhere in the poem. On the whole the balance of probability seems to me to be in favour of the connection.

The Ruin follows *The Husband's Message* in the *Exeter Book* and suffers from the same rent. It differs, somewhat, in character from the rest of these poems in that the misfortunes which it tells of are those not of a person but of a place. First the poet describes an ancient building, or rather group of buildings, deserted, roofless and tottering. Then he goes on to reflect that these buildings were once richly adorned, full of

was Chandos (p. 52)—and in general looks upon himself as the printer of opinions 'propagated in all Conversations' and as 'but the Collector of . . . dispers'd Remarks'. 'A Master Key', in fact, was designed as a reply to gossip as well as to printed abuse. We know that many of those he mentions had attacked him before—there is no surprise in finding such gentlemen of the *Dunciad* mentioned as Moore, Concanen, Theobald, Welsted, and Goode—but the appearance of Hervey, Dodington, and Yonge in their company calls for some comment. I have attempted elsewhere to account for the prominence these men achieved in Pope's satire, but that account needs rewriting in the light of the 'Master Key'. It is now clear that rightly or wrongly Pope associated them with gossip about Timon. Their offences were amply revenged in the *Imitations of Horace*, the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, and the *Epilogue to the Satires*.

When was 'A Master Key' written? Hill pointed out to Pope in a letter dated 23 December that the dissociation of Timon and Chandos in the *Daily Post-Boy* and the *Daily Journal* was not altogether convincing. The dissociation was not specific enough. When Pope replied to Hill on 5 February he produced a few more details to show how unlike Chandos Timon was, and the passage in his letter reads like a summary of the arguments used in the 'Master Key' (p. 53). If the 'Master Key' was written by 5 February 1731/2, it had only just been finished, for the references to Welsted's 'writings' suggests that Pope had heard about *Of False Fame*, advertised on 3 February, as well as the earlier *Of Dullness and Scandal*. It is unlikely that 'A Master Key' was written later than February 1731/2, since public interest in the subject was then no longer fresh.[1] The newspapers continued to advertise Welsted's attacks throughout February, but no fresh ones are mentioned. Perhaps Pope recognized that the clamour had died down, that the disclaimer he had printed with the third edition of his poem[2] was enough, and that the most favourable opportunity for publishing 'A Master Key' was already past.

[1] Mr. Ault has drawn my attention to two further attacks, *Mr. Taste, The Poetical Fop: or, the Modes of the Court. A Comedy* (advertised 8 April 1732) and *Ingratitude* (advertised 25 May 1733). These, however, provide no arguments for dating 'A Master Key' any later in the year. By the time *Ingratitude* was written, Tyers's plans for restoring Vauxhall Gardens (see p. 51) must have been widely known: clearly they were not known when 'A Master Key' was written.

[2] Published on 15 Jan. according to the *London Evening Post*.

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first confess that I think he has some Genius, and that it is *Only his Morals* that I attack.

But what seems very unaccountable is, that A Man of any *Genius* (which one wou'd think has its foundation in *Com̄on Sense*) shou'd be the *Greatest Fool* in his age, & constantly choose for the Objects of his Satire, the Best Friends he has? All the Noblemen whom we shall prove him to abuse in this Epistle are such, whose Esteem and Distinction he seem'd most to Court, & to possess; or whose Power and Influence cou'd best protect or credit him: Nay all the Criticks who have been most provok'd at it, are such, as either had been his Friends or call'd themselves so, or had made some pretence to his Acquaintance or Correspondence.

It it [*sic*] to *some* of *these* that I am beholden for many In-lets into his *Meaning* & *Thoughts*: For a man's meanings & Thoughts lye too remote from any such, as cou'd make the discovery from *Private Conversation*, or some degree of *Confidence*, or *Familiarity*. The Honour & Veracity of such I will not doubt: especially of so honourable Persons as Lord Fanny, M[r] Dorimant, the Lady De-la-Wit, the Countess of Methusalem, & others.

I confess further, that I am in many instances, but the Collector of the dispers'd Remarks of his Majesty's Poet Laureat, his Illustrious Associate S[r] William Sweet-Lips, the Lady Knaves-acre & M[rs] Haywood (those ornaments of their Sex) and Capt. Breval, and

1–2. *Only his Morals*] Pope was specially sensitive to attacks upon his morals. He told Hill (26 Jan. 1730–1) that he 'never thought any great matters of my poetical capacity; I only thought it a little better, comparatively, than that of some very mean writers, who are too proud. But, I do know certainly, my moral life is superior to that of most of the wits of these days.'

18. *Lord Fanny*] Pope's earliest use hitherto of this *soubriquet* for Lord Hervey ('Sporus') was *Imit. of Hor., Sat. II. i* (1733), l. 6.

M[r] Dorimant] Probably George Bubb Dodington, see p. 54, ll. 10 ff. Pope mentions Dorimant again in *Imit. of Hor., Ep. I. i* (1738), l. 88. For Pope's subsequent use of Dodington as a type-figure, see *Imitations of Horace*, ed. J. Butt, 1939, pp. 112–14.

Lady De-la-Wit] The choice lies between Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, 'that dang'rous thing, a female wit' (manuscript variant of *Ep. to Arbuthnot*, l. 369), and Lady Delorain; see *Imitations of Horace*, ed. cit., p. 365.

19. *The Countess of Methusalem*] I do not know which elderly peeress is meant.

21. *his Majesty's Poet Laureat*] Colley Cibber had been appointed to succeed Eusden fourteen months before this was written. Pope's grievances against him are dealt with by Professor Sutherland in his edition of the *Dunciad* (1943, p. 433), and by Mr. Ault in his *New Light on Pope*.

22. *S[r] William Sweet-Lips*] Sir W. Yonge, a valued political supporter of Walpole. Pope derided his oratory in the *Epilogue to the Satires*, i. 68, but Dr. Johnson thought him the best speaker in the House of Commons (Boswell, *Life*, ed. Hill-Powell, ii. 161). *the Lady Knaves-acre*] I do not know who is meant.

22–3. *M[rs] Haywood*] Novelist, dramatist, and writer of scandalous memoirs. See *Dunciad*, ed. cit., p. 443.

23. *Capt. Breval*] One of the 'dunces'. See ibid., p. 430.

CHAPTER IV

OLD ENGLISH CHRISTIAN POETRY

ONLY two names emerge from the anonymity which shrouds the bulk of Old English Christian poetry, namely, those of Caedmon and Cynewulf; and, in the past, practically all the religious poetry we possess has been attributed to one or other of these two poets. But, as we shall see, the majority of the poems to be considered here should rather be regarded as the work of singers whose names have perished, as folk-song, as manifestations of the spirit of the people—in the same sense in which the tale of Beowulf's adventures embodied the aspirations of all valiant thegns, or the epic of *Waldhere* summarised the popular ideals of love and honour. The subject of the Christian epic is, indeed, for the most part, apparently, foreign and even, at times, oriental: the heroes of the Old and New Testaments, the saints as they live in the legends of the church, furnish the theme. The method of treatment hardly differs, however, from that followed in non-Christian poetry; the metrical form, with rare exceptions, is the alliterative line, constructed on the same principles as in *Beowulf*; Wyrd has become the spirit of Providence, Christ and His apostles have become English kings or chiefs, followed, as in feudal duty bound, by hosts of clansmen; the homage paid to the Divine Son is the allegiance due to the scion of an Anglian king, comparable to that paid by Beowulf to his liege lord Hygelac, or to that displayed by Byrhtnoth on the banks of the Panta; the ideals of early English Christianity do not differ essentially from those of English paganism. And yet there is a difference.

The Christianity of England in the seventh and eighth centuries, and the Latin influences brought in its wake, which inspired the poetry under discussion, was a fusion, a commingling, of two different strains. Accustomed as we are to date the introduction of Christianity into England from the mission of St Augustine, we are apt to forget that, prior to the landing

to convey his Malignity to others: But he abuses him for a *worse want*, the want of *Charity* (one from which his Lordship is as free as any man alive). This he tells him directly, without disguise, and in the second person,

—What thy hard heart denies,
Thy charitable Vanity supplies.

So much for Malice; now for ill-nature,

Another age shall see the golden Ear
Imbrown *thy* Slope, and nod on *thy* Parterre,
Deep Harvest bury all *thy Pride* has plann'd,
And laughing Ceres re-assume the Land.

That is, 'My Lord, your Gardens shall soon be Plow'd up, & turned into Corn-fields.'

How he indulges himself in drawing this picture? and with what joy does he afterwards expatiate upon the mortifying Consideration, how all his Lordships labours in Architecture shall be lost, and his Models misapply'd by imitating Fools?

—Reverse your Ornaments & hang them all
On some patch'd Dog-hole &c

This is his Element! this his Pleasure! when he comes at last, with much ado, to comend the Noble Lord, how sparcing, how short, is he! The whole is but two lines,

In you, my Lord, Taste Sanctifies Expence,
For Splendour borrows all her rays from *Sense*.

which amounts just to this, 'My Lord, you are no Fool.' but this we shall see by what follows, he thinks a great distinction for a Lord in these days.

Oft' have you hinted to your Brother Peer—
Something there is—'Tis Sense.—Good Sense.

A Hint does he call it? 'tis a very broad one, that there is a Want of Sense in his Brother Peers, that is to say, in the whole House of Lords. Mr Concanen & Mr Theobald (both Lawyers) are of opinion, this may be prosecuted as Scandalum Magnatum on the whole Collective Body. From what we have observ'd of his Prophecy of the Destruction of Chiswick Gardens, it shou'd seem as if this wretch alluded to his Lordships want of a *Male Heir*. If he had one, he had been probably treated like another of his *Friends*, the Lord

32. *both Lawyers*] Perhaps an allusion to Concanen's appointment, 30 Jan. 1731–2, as attorney-general of Jamaica. Theobald had been an attorney before abandoning the law for literature.

37–49. l, 1. *Lord Bathurst*] The friend whom Pope helped to lay out his grounds at Cirencester, and to whom he addressed *Of the Use of Riches* (the third *Moral Essay*).

This subjectivity is a new feature in English literature; for most non-Christian English poetry is epic. *Beowulf* is a tale of brave deeds nobly done, with but few reflections concerning them. At rare intervals, scattered here and there throughout the poem, we meet with some touch of sentiment, a foreboding of evil to come, a few words on the inexorable character of fate, an exhortation to do great deeds so that after death the chosen warrior may fare the better, occasionally a half-Christian reference to an all-ruling Father (probably the addition of a later and Christian hand); but, as a rule, no introspection checks the even flow of narrative: *arma virumque cano.* When Christianity became the source of poetic inspiration, we find the purely epic character of a poem modified by the introduction of a lyric element. The hero no longer aspires to win gold from an earthly king; his prize is a heavenly crown, to be won, it may even be, in spiritual conflict; the glories of life on earth are transitory; earthly valour cannot atone for the stains of sin upon the soul; the beauty of nature, in her fairest aspects, cannot compare with the radiance of a better land; the terror that lurks waiting for the evil-doer upon earth fades away at the contemplation of that day of wrath and mourning when the Judge of all the earth shall deal to every man according to his deeds. The early Christian poet does not sing of earthly love; we have no erotic poetry in pre-Conquest England; but the sentiment that gives life to the poetry of Dante and Milton is not absent from the best of our early poets' attempts at religious self-expression.

Beyond the fact that his name seems to imply that he was of Celtic descent, we have no knowledge of the historical Caedmon other than that to be derived from the often-quoted passage in Bede:

> In the monastery of this abbess (*i.e.* the abbess Hild at Streonesbalh) there was a certain brother specially distinguished and honoured by divine grace, for he was wont to make songs such as tended to religion and piety. Whatsoever he had learned from scholars concerning the Scriptures he forthwith decked out in poetic language with the greatest sweetness and [illegible]
> song, but only those which pertained to religion and which his pious tongue might fitly sing. The man had lived in the world till the time that he was of advanced age, and had never learnt any poetry. And as he was often at a feast when it was arranged, to promote mirth, that they should all in turn sing to the harp, whenever he saw the harp come near him he arose out of shame from the feast and went home to his house. Having

to convey his Malignity to others: But he abuses him for a *worse want*, the want of *Charity* (one from which his Lordship is as free as any man alive). This he tells him directly, without disguise, and in the second person,

—What thy hard heart denies,
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So much for Malice; now for ill-nature,

Another age shall see the golden Ear
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This is his Element! this his Pleasure! when he comes at last, with much ado, to coḿend the Noble Lord, how sparcing, how short, is he! The whole is but two lines,

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The hymn was first published in its Northumbrian form[1] by Wanley, in his *Catalogus historico-criticus* (1705), p. 287, as *canticum illud Saxonicum Caedmonis a Baeda memoratum*; and, from that day to this, it has been regarded by the majority of scholars as the genuine work of Caedmon.

Bede gives a Latin version of the lines, which corresponds very closely to the original, but which he introduces thus: *Caedmon coepit cantare...versus quorum iste est sensus*; and, in conclusion, he reiterates: *Hic est sensus, non autem ordo ipse verborum*, as if he had given a merely approximate rendering of his original. Much discussion has hinged upon the exact meaning to be attached to the words *sensus* and *ordo*, though Bede is evidently alluding merely to the difficulty of reproducing poetry in prose, for he continues: *neque enim possunt carmina, quamvis optime composita, ex alia in aliam linguam ad verbum sine detrimento sui decoris ac dignitatis transferri.* The West Saxon version of the lines is preserved in the English translation of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*[2], with the introductory comment: "þara endebyrdnis þis is." Now "endebyrdnis" simply means *ordo*, and it may be safe to assume that both Bede's Latin version and the West Saxon version are attempts at translation from the original Northumbrian.

Bede's detailed enumeration of Caedmon's other achievements must be held responsible for the attribution to Caedmon of a large number of religious poems of a similar character, extant only in West Saxon form, in the Bodl. MS, Junius XI, an opinion which, in the light of modern critical scholarship, is no longer tenable. Indeed, no one would to-day seriously maintain even that these poems are all by one author; it is more likely, as we shall see, that more than one writer has had a hand in each. But the fact that it is impossible to claim these particular poems for Caedmon does not militate against the probability of his having composed similar, though, perhaps, shorter pieces, which may have been worked upon later by more scholarly hands. Religious poetry, sung to the harp as it passed from hand to hand, must have flourished in the monastery of the abbess Hild, and the kernel of Bede's story concerning the birth of our earliest poet must be that the brethren and sisters on that bleak northern shore spoke "to each other in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."

[1] See Cambridge Univ. Lib. MS. Kk, 5, 16, Fol. 128.
[2] Cf. *post*, Chapter VI.

We have now done with Chiswick, a Soyl so fruitfull of Satyr for the Poet, that I tremble for the *Reverend Vicar* of the *Parish*! not only as he is his *Friend*, but as his eminent Learning, & particularly in the *Greek*, must have made him sorely obnoxious to him.

Being arrived in Town, where should he begin but with the *Best, Good Man* of the City, even the Father of the City, Sir Gilbert!

What brought Sr Shylocks ill-got wealth to waste!

There could not be invented a falser Slander, or one that would *more hurt* this eminent Citizen, than to insinuate that he had *wasted his wealth.* 'Tis true, I think as well as Sir Gilbert, that *every Expence is Some Waste*: yet surely so small a sum, as ten pounds eleven shillings, for Iron Rails to secure his Court-yard, ought never to have been thus pointed out & insulted? But what means he by wealth ill-got? neither Sir G nor I know of any such thing. This is as errant nonsence as what follows— A *Wealthy Fool.* How can that be? Wealth is the proof of Wisdom, & to say that Sir G—'s wealth is wasted, is to say that his Parts are decay'd.

See Sportive Fate—Bids Babo build—

Here the Criticks differ. Some read, for Babo, Bubo. Others fix this on a Peer who I confess is noble enough for our Authors abuse; but (what I always take for a cause to doubt it) one to whom he has no sort of Obligation. Tis certain Sh—d is this Nobleman's Builder, but why should he satyrize Sh—d? Sh—d is none of his *Friends.* I am persuaded that by Sh—d he means *Gibs* with whom he is acquainted.

The next we shall take notice of is the only Person he seems

2. *Vicar*] The Vicar of Chiswick at this time was Thomas Wood (1681–1732). An epigram written in a copy of Evelyn's *Numismata*, given by Wood to Kent, and attributed to Pope, appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1735). A slightly different version was published in *Notes and Queries* (13 March 1851) and included by Carruthers in his edition of Pope's poems:

Tom Wood of Chiswick, deep divine,
To painter Kent gave all this coin.
'Tis the first coin, I'm bold to say,
That ever churchman gave to lay.

7. *Sr Shylock*] Later changed to 'Sir Visto'. Sir Gilbert was Sir Gilbert Heathcote, Lord Mayor of London, and one of the founders of the Bank of England. Though reputed to be the richest commoner in England, he had a reputation for parsimony. Pope mentions him again in *Moral Essays*, iii. 101, and *Imit. of Hor., Ep. II*, ii, l. 240.

20. *a Peer*] In *A Miscellany of Taste* Babo is identified with 'Lord C—d—n', i.e., presumably, Charles, second Baron Cadogan (1691–1776). I have not been able to discover whether Cadogan employed Edward Shepherd [Sh—d] as a builder. Shepherd, who died in 1747, built a house for the Duke of Chandos on the north side of Cavendish Square about 1720. He had also been at work on the north side of Grosvenor Square. See J. Summerson, *Georgian London* (1945), pp. 87, 92.

24. *Gibs*] James Gibbs (1682–1754), the architect of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, London, and the Radcliffe Camera, Oxford. Two letters from him to Pope survive.

England, but unable to dissociate himself entirely from native habits of speech, or whether we look upon it as a somewhat imperfect translation from Old Saxon by some Old English monk whom professional duties—we need only think of Boniface—had brought into contact with the learning and literature of the continent. At any rate it is an early, and a pleasing, instance of the fruitful exchange of literary ideas between two great nations.

The relative age of the two poems is a matter still under discussion. *Genesis* B cannot have been composed earlier than the second half of the ninth century, since we know that the author of the *Heliand*, upon whose work it is based, wrote in response to a command from king Lewis the Pious; but we have hardly any data for determining whether it is earlier or later in date of composition than *Genesis* A. Its author, like the author of the *Heliand*, apparently made use of the works of bishop Avitus of Vienne, the medieval Latin poet.

Genesis A contains not a few passages illustrative of that blending of heathen and Christian elements which is characteristic of Old English religious poetry. The description of Old Testament fights shows that the spirit of the author of the *Battle of Finnsburh* is to be found beneath the veneer of Christianity. And, on the other hand, the description of the dove, seeking rest and finding none, could only be the work of a Christian poet. The tenderness of feeling for the dumb creation, and the joy in "rest after toil" which it expresses, are due to Christian influences upon the imaginative powers of an Old English scop.

Genesis B contains some fine poetic passages. The character of Satan is admirably conceived, and the familiar theme of a lost paradise is set forth in dignified and dramatic language not unworthy of the height of its great argument. In the dark regions and "swart mists" of Hell, Satan and his host, swept thither by the Lord of Heaven himself, indulge in a joy that is purely heathen, in contemplating the vengeance to be taken on the race that has supplanted them in the favour of God[1].

Exodus is a paraphrase of a portion only of the book from which it takes its name, *i.e.* the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea and the destruction of the Egyptians. Part of the

[1] For a discussion of the possible relation between the Satan of *Genesis* B and the Satan of *Paradise Lost*, cf. Stopford Brooke, *Early English Literature*, vol. II, pp. 101 ff. and Morley, *English Writers*, vol. II, p. 109.

tho' that one were the Best Man in the world: There are so many By-peeps & squinting Glances, besides the main View, that instead of twenty things being aim'd at one, every one Circumstance is aim'd at twenty.

I must first take notice of the greatest Authorities which seem against me, and great ones they are indeed, Sir William Sweet-lips and Mr Dorimant. Equal Genius's! Equal Judges! every way equal Ornaments to their Country! the Mecænas, & the Phoebus of our Age! and to both of whom our Poet has been indebted for as great Commendation & Praise as was consistent with their own Superiority. In order to give due Weight to their several arguments, I must take a View of Timon's character in all its Circumstances.

A Proud, haughty Man, with no other Idea of Greatness but Bulk and Size, but himself a little contemptible Creature. His House consists of Unequal Parts, heap'd one upon another like a Quarry of Stones. His Gardens are choak'd up with Walls, every where in sight, which destroy all Appearance of Natural Beauty. The Form of his Plantation is stiffly regular, & the same repeated. A vast Lake-fall to the North: an immense Parterre with two Small Cupids in it: Trees cut into human figures, & statues as close as Trees: his Fountains without Water: a Terras of Steep Slopes with a Study opening upon it, where he receives his guests with the utmost Affectation: his Books chosen for their Printers or Binders, no good Modern Books, & (to make them perfectly a Show) the upper Shelves only Wooden and painted ones. He has a Chappel, with Musick & Painting in it, but the Musick consists of Jigs and loose Airs, and the painting of indecent or naked figures. He gives Entertainments attended by an hundred Servants, in a Hall paved with Marble; his Bufet is ornamented with Serpents & Tritons; his Dinner is a solemn, formal, troublesome thing, with perpetual rounds of Salvers & Sweet wine, & upon the whole with so much Pride & affected State, as to make every man Sick both of his Dinner & of Him.

This is the Character, which Mr Dorimant, Mr K—y, the Lord Fanny, have imputed to the D. of C. This is what has been affirmed with Oaths by Mr C—r and very publickly by Mr Theobalds, Mr Goode, Mr James Moore, the whole Herd of Criticks, & all the honourable Gentlemen of the Dunciad.

8. Yonge's claim to be the Phoebus of the age rests partly on some trifles in verse and partly on some songs in the comic opera, *The Jovial Crew*, which had recently been produced at Drury Lane. Dodington's pose as the Maecenas of the age was assisted by Edward Young, amongst other writers, who dedicated his third satire to him in 1726, and by Thomson, who dedicated *Summer* to him in 1727.

36. Barnham Goode (1674–1739), a master at Eton College and one of Walpole's writers in the *Daily Courant*. Pope believed that 'sneering Goode, half malice and half whim', had written a libel on him called *The Mock Æsop*. See *Dunciad*, ed. cit., p. 441.

the third with Christ's *Temptation*. Only the first is complete. All three, probably, belong to the end of the ninth century and all have a homiletic tendency. The second has been compared with the *Crist* of Cynewulf, with which it is linked by virtue of theme as well as by style. The description of the last judgment suggests the more impressive picture of that event contained in *Crist*, and the *Harrowing of Hell* recalls, and can sustain comparison with, examples of later more elaborate treatment of the same subject. By their religious fervour, and by their apparently ruder form, it is possible that these poems are nearer to the original body of Caedmon's work than the poems previously discussed.

The finest of all the poems erroneously attributed to Caedmon is the fragment entitled *Judith*. As there seems to be ground for supposing that this beautiful fragment, worthy of the skill of a scop whose Christianity had not sufficed to quell his martial instincts, his pride in battle and his manly prowess, is of later date than has been thought by certain historians, it is dealt with in a later chapter of the present volume.

Turning to Cynewulf and the poems that may be, or have been, attributed to him, we are on somewhat safer ground. The personality of the poet is, indeed, wrapped in an obscurity hardly less deep than that which hides Caedmon. The only truth at which we can arrive concerning him is that he must be the author of four well-known poems, since he marked them as his own by the insertion of his signature in runes. Conjecture has been busy to prove that he may have been identical with a certain abbot of Peterborough, who lived about the year 1000. But this hypothesis has ceased to be tenable since we know that the West Saxon transcript of his poems, the only form in which the accredited ones are preserved, cannot be the original; moreover, the abbot invariably spelt his name Cinwulf. Equally impossible is the theory that he was Cynewulf, bishop of Lindisfarne, who died in 781 or 783. The latter lived in troublous times, and nothing we know of his life agrees with inferences we may reasonably draw from autobiographical allusions in Cynewulf's poems. A theory that the author was certainly of Northumbrian origin was, in the first instance, based upon an erroneous interpretation of the first riddle in a collection of Old English *Riddles* long attributed to him. Dietrich gave the solution as Coenwulf, the supposed Northumbrian form of the name Cynewulf. But, apart from the fact that

Duke. But M[r] Moore replys very wittily, Timon lov'd Mankind *before* he hated them, he did not hate men till they had *abus'd* him, and the Duke may now with some cause, for he has been *very much abused*. Timon was famous for Extravagancies, the Duke for well-judg'd Bounties; but Peter W—rs Esq. argues thus. 'He that is 'bountifull: is not so rich as if he had never been bountifull: what-'ever a man parts with, he is so much the poorer for; & he that has 'but a hundred pounds less than he had, is in some decline of Fortune.' This he thinks a plain reason for any body to disesteem, or abuse a Man. And M[r] Dorimant also thinks nothing so natural, as to *Desert* or *fall upon* a *Great Man* on the *first suspicion* of his *Decline* of *Fortune*. But certainly every Man of Honour who is what another-guess Author than this, in another-guess Epistle than this, describes himself,

In Power a Servant, out of Power a Friend,

must feel the highest Indignation at such a practise. Indeed our Poets Enemies (and to such only I give Credit) have often severely lash'd him in sharp Satyrs & lively Ballads for the Contrary practise: for his adhering to some Folks in their Exile, to some in their disgrace, & others in their Imprisonment. And I do think there is one good reason why he should rather attack a Man in Power, because it were a greater Object of his Envy, and a greater Proof of his Impudence.

Let us then hear Sir William (who thinks in this against the Majority, as he never sides with it, but on cogent reasons.) Why (says he) for God's sake may not this be Sir Robert? are not his works as great as any man's? Who has more Groves nodding at Groves of his own plantation? I cannot say much as to his Chappel; but who has rival'd his Dinners? especially at the Time this Poem was publish'd, when he was splendidly entertaining the Duke of Lorain? Has he not a Large Bufet? Has he not a hundred, nay near five hundred, Servants? (In power, your Servants) and who oftener drinks the King's Health? How convincing are all these

5. *Peter W—rs*] Peter Walter or Waters (1664?–1746), a moneylender, and a favourite butt in Pope's satire. See Pope's note to *Moral Essays*, iii. 20, and *Imitations of Horace*, ed. cit., p. 390.

15. *In Power a Servant*] From Dodington's *Epistle to . . . Sir Robert Walpole* (1726). Pope quotes it again in *Epistle to Satires*, ii. 161.

19. Pope had adhered to Atterbury in exile, to Bolingbroke in disgrace, and to Oxford in imprisonment. Cf. also *Imit. Hor., Sat. II. i*, l. 125 f.; *Epistle to Satires*, ii. 74 ff.; and the 'Epistle to Robert Earl of Oxford', prefixed to Parnell's poems.

26. *Sir Robert*] Walpole.

30–. Francis, Duke of Lorraine, later Emperor Francis I (1708–65) and husband of Maria Theresa, paid a much-publicized visit to England in the autumn of 1731. On Monday, 15 Nov., the *Daily Journal* reported that His Serene Highness had come to Town 'last Saturday' from Sir Robert Walpole's seat in Norfolk.

his, and *Andreas* which is very possibly his. The following lines, for instance, must, surely, be the work of one whose daily life had been spent in contact with the sea:

> Over the sea-marges
> Hourly urged they on ..the wave-riding horses.
> Then they let o'er Fifel's wave foaming stride along
> Steep-stemmed rushers of the sea. Oft withstood the bulwark,
> O'er the surging of the waters, swinging strokes of waves[1].

Further, assuming *Guthlac* B to be by Cynewulf[2], we may note the fact that the fen-journey of the original has been transformed into a sea-voyage, and this would appear to tell against an East Anglian authorship.

The final result of much discussion seems to resolve itself into this: that Cynewulf was not a West Saxon, but, probably, a Northumbrian, though Mercian origin is not impossible; and that he wrote towards the end of the eighth century. This latter point will find further support when we proceed to discuss the individual poems.

We know nothing else concerning Cynewulf with any degree of certainty. We infer from the nature of his poetry that he was of a deeply religious nature, but it is hazardous to deduce the character of a poet from his apparently subjective work; we learn that he lived to an old age, which he felt to be a burden; that, at some time of his life, he had known the favour of princes and enjoyed the gifts of kings; he must have been the thegn or scop of some great lord, and not merely an itinerant singer or gleeman, as some critics have held. He was a man of learning, certainly a good Latin scholar, for some of his work is based upon Latin originals. Critics are not agreed as to the period of life in which he occupied himself with the composition of religious poetry, nor as to the chronological order of his works. Some scholars assume that, after leading until old age the life of a man of the world, and attaining some distinction as an author of secular poetry—of which, by the way, if the *Riddles* are rejected, we have no trace—he became converted by the vision described in *The Dream of the Rood*, and devoted himself ever afterwards to religious poetry, the last consummate effort of his poetic powers being *Elene*. There are two drawbacks to this theory, the first being that we cannot base biographical deductions with any certainty upon a poem like *The Dream of the Rood*, which we have no historical grounds for claiming as Cynewulf's; the

[1] Stopford Brooke's version.

[2] See p. 58.

& gaudy Sideboard, of a Nobleman (who to inhance the Ill-nature of the Satyr) has lay'd all his Vanities in the Grave. I mean the Companion in arms & Friend of the great Duke of Marleborough.

I know that the Building describ'd to be so huge, so like a Quarry, such a Heap, &c. is the Immortal Castle of Blenheim (to which the Spite of a Papist may well be imagin'd) and I know my Lord F—th will be of my opinion. And possibly had not the Duke of Shrewsbury been once a Papist, he wou'd never have call'd it a *Quarry of Stone above-ground*: That well known saying of his fixes this to Blenheim.

Were it to be apply'd to a House and not a Castle, I should fancy it must be to one in Dorsetshire of the same Architect; It would be like this Poets Injustice, to reflect on a Gentleman's Taste for a thing which he was oblig'd to build on another Man's scheme—But this Gentleman's Taste is since fully vindicated, by what has been built on his own Directions, that most Genteel Pile in Pall-Mall, which is the Admiration of all Beholders.

No, the Greater the Object, the Stronger is his malice. Greatness itself is his Aversion; nay he hates Pride for being only the Shadow of Greatness. From National Works he would proceed to Royal, if he durst. Who but must have observ'd in this light that monstrous Couplet?

—Proud Versailles! thy Glory falls,
And Nero's Terrasses desert their walls.

What an Impudent Reflection on the memory of Lewis the Fourteenth of France, and another Great Prince!

I hope the Zeal which has been shewn hitherto only in general against this Poet, may soon operate farther when the Three Estates are assembled, and Proper Pains and Penalties be found to repress such Insolence.

1. *a Nobleman*] William, Earl of Cadogan (1672–1726), Marlborough's quarter-master-general in the war of the Spanish Succession. He had earned Pope's resentment for saying of Atterbury, imprisoned in the Tower, 'Fling him to the lions' (Spence, *Anecdotes*, ed. Singer, 1820, p. 156). Cadogan's vanity had been amply demonstrated at Marlborough's funeral (J. R. Sutherland, *Background to Queen Anne* (1939), p. 226 f.).

6. *Lord F—th*] Hugh Boscawen, Viscount Falmouth (1680?–1734), who had married Marlborough's niece.

8. *a Papist*] The Duke of Shrewsbury had been brought up a Roman Catholic, but had transferred his allegiance to the Church of England in 1679. For Pope's relations with him, see *Imitations of Horace*, ed. cit., p. 386.

11. *one in Dorsetshire*] Sir John Vanbrugh, the architect of Blenheim, had been employed by Dodington's uncle to rebuild the great house at Eastbury in 1718, and had been retained by Dodington when he inherited the estate in 1720. The work was not completed till 1738 (J. Hutchins, *Hist. Antiq. County of Dorset* (1868), iii. 456 f.).

15. *that most Genteel Pile in Pall-Mall*] 'Dodington's house in Pall Mall stood close to the garden the Prince [of Wales] had bought there of Lord Chesterfield' (Hervey, *Memoirs*, ed. Sedgwick (1931), p. 388).

anticipation of the third part. The question is a nice one and is not, at present, capable of solution. If we assume the unity of the poem, Cynewulf is, undoubtedly, the author; if we deny it, we are confronted with the further difficulty of determining the authorship of the first and third parts. From a literary point of view, *Crist* is, perhaps, the most interesting of Cynewulf's poems. It illustrates fully the influence of Latin Christianity upon English thought. The subject is derived from Latin homilies and hymns: part I, the advent of Christ, seems to be largely based upon the *Roman Breviary*, part II upon the Ascension sermon of pope Gregory, part III upon an alphabetic Latin hymn on the last judgment, quoted by Bede in *De Arte Metrica*. In addition, the Gospel of St Matthew and Gregory's tenth homily have furnished suggestions. Yet the poet is no mere versifier of Latin theology. We are confronted, for the first time in English literature, with the product of an original mind. The author has transmuted the material derived from his sources into the passionate out-pourings of personal religious feeling. The doctrines interspersed are, of course, medieval in tone: one of the three signs by which the blessed shall realise their possession of God's favour is the joy they will derive from the contemplation of the sufferings of the damned. But, for the most part, the poem is a series of choric hymns of praise, of imaginative passages descriptive of visions not less sublime than that of *The Dream of the Rood*.

Crist is followed immediately in the *Exeter Book* by the poem entitled *Juliana*. This is an Old English version of the *Acta S. Julianae virginis martyris*. The proof of Cynewulfian authorship lies, as has already been said, in the insertion of his name in runes. The martyr is supposed to have lived about the time of the emperor Maximian. She, of course, successfully overcomes all the minor temptations with which she is confronted, including an offer of marriage with a pagan, and, finally, having routed the devil in person, endures martyrdom by the sword.

Equally insignificant considered as poetry, but of the utmost importance as a link in a chain of literary evidence, are the lines known as *The Fates of the Apostles*. The title sufficiently indicates the contents. The poem is preserved in the *Vercelli Book*, a codex containing both verse and prose, and, for some unknown reason, in the possession of the chapter of Vercelli, north Italy. The first ninety-five lines, which follow immediately after the poem call[ed] *Andreas*, occupy fol. 52 b—53 b. They were considered an ano[ny]mous fragment until Napier discovered that a set of verses

POPE'S 'EPISTLE TO HARLEY': AN INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS

GEOFFREY TILLOTSON

I

To be a poet is, to begin with, a matter of being; from time to time being becomes doing, and the poet writes down a poem. There is the antecedent cause, the poet's general readiness to write poetry—as when Henry Taylor remarked that Tennyson was 'full of poetry with nothing to put it in' or when Keats foresaw that in writing *Endymion* he would have to 'make 4000 Lines of one bare circumstance and fill them with "Poetry".'[1] And there is the efficient cause, the occasion, as when, at last, Tennyson found his theme. Occasions vary in their importance for the writer and the reader. On the one hand, it is clear that there must have been an occasion for Keats's 'Ode to Melancholy', a decisive moment striking into the general poeticalness of Keats's life: 'No, no, go not to Lethe . . .' seems, indeed, to record its urgency.[2] But we may suppose that Keats was scarcely aware of it. If he was, he did not require any awareness of it from his reader. On the other hand, the occasion of 'On first looking into Chapman's Homer' dictated the very title of the poem. In that title Keats dated the poem ('On *first* looking') and localized it ('looking into' a particular copy of 'Chapman's Homer'). Some poems are better left undated and unlocalized. The poetry they contain is of the kind that seems more impressive from being left floating in a general poeticalness. Not being tied to any one place, it seems more widespreading, not to any one time, more lasting. We are more impressed by Keats's melancholy when we are left to think of it vaguely as chronic: if its opening cry suggests an occasion, we accept it as prepared by many turns before this last turn of the screw. Other poems, it is equally true, need to be seen as being occasional. If Keats had agreed that poetry is emotion

[1] *Letters of John Keats*, ed. M. B. Forman (ed. 1947), p. 52.

[2] The urgency, rather, of its second moment: what is now the first stanza was originally preceded by another, now cancelled.

other poems possess; there is, for instance, no *finit* or "amen" to denote the end, but, unfortunately for the inventors of the hypothesis, *The Fates of the Apostles* does not lack a beginning; nor are St Andrew's labours omitted from the general review of the good works done by the twelve, which might possibly have been expected had the author of *The Fates of the Apostles* also been the author of the longer history of St Andrew. There is more ground for accepting a theory originated by Sievers with regard to the last sixteen lines of the fragment containing Cynewulf's signature, discovered by Napier. In the opinion of Sievers these sixteen lines would not only be an inordinately lengthy conclusion to so short a poem as *The Fates*, but they are superfluous in so far as they are a mere repetition of the lines which had preceded the runic passage. He would, therefore, wish to see in them the conclusion of some lost poem of Cynewulf, and only accidentally attached to *The Fates of the Apostles*. Upholders of the theory of the Cynewulfian authorship of *Andreas* might be able to claim them as the missing conclusion to that poem, and the fact of their being attached to a piece of undoubtedly Cynewulfian work might strengthen the attribution of *Andreas* to our poet. But, after fully weighing the arguments on either side, we must confess that the evidence so far forthcoming does not suffice for a satisfactory solution of the question.

Elene is, undoubtedly, Cynewulf's masterpiece. The subject is contained in the *Acta Sanctorum* of 4 May. Grimm also referred to the same subject as occurring in the *Legenda aurea* of Jacobus a Voragine. It is impossible to decide whether the legend first reached England in a Latin or in an older Greek form. The story is that of the discovery of the true cross by Helena, the mother of the emperor Constantine. The search carried to so successful a conclusion was instituted by the emperor in consequence of the famous vision, the sign of a cross in the sky bearing the inscription *in hoc signo vinces*. Much history hangs upon this tale. Its immediate importance for us is that the conversion of the emperor by this means became the starting-point for the adoration of the cross: the symbol which had hitherto been one of ignominy became one of triumph and glory. The festival of the exaltation of the cross was established in the western church in 701, in consequence of the supposed discovery in Rome of a particle of the true cross. This event is duly recorded by Bede in *De sex aetatibus saeculi*, the news having, no doubt, been brought to England by abbot Ceolfrid, who was in Rome at the time. At any rate, if this event

vivid for a visit to a haunt of the poet. However poetical, readers of poetry cannot but remain human beings, and human beings (in the 'civilized' world, at least) have always been interested in careers, and especially in the great careers of great men. And when it comes to a poem that is declared occasional, the reader has his practical instinct already provided for. He does not need either to seek or to invent the particulars. He has his time and place fixed for him. If we are vaguely aware of Keats the man when reading the 'Ode to Melancholy', we are more particularly aware of him when reading 'On first looking into Chapman's Homer'. When a poem is declared to be occasional, we can only call ourselves readers of it if we recover as much of its occasion as we can.

II

During the eighteenth century, as everybody knows, there was too much writing-up of occasions. Innumerable 'copies of verses' 'on' this or that event printed in innumerable volumes called *Poems on Several Occasions* were firmly linked to the practical life. Human beings are so constituted that they respect the evidence of practical life whenever they meet it, but there is little to respect in most of the poems which were linked with it in the eighteenth century. We rarely condemn even trivial occasions as having been too trivial; nor do we condemn their celebration by means of verses; what we condemn is the pride that seeks the printer. When we do not condemn the printing, this means that the poems to some extent remain what Pope called 'living Lays'. And when we choose to turn back to such living occasional poems, it follows that we must attend not only to their words but to their occasion, their practical historical context. To take an instance. Dr. Delany wrote 'Verses left with a Silver Standish, on the Dean of St. Patrick's Desk, on his Birth-day', and Swift a poem in reply. Surveying Swift's achievement as a poet, Delany complimented him on his 'living Lines', and though Delany has no comparable power of vivification, his own poem is vivified a little. In 1949 it still has enough to it to interest, say, twenty readers (was not Swift always avid for statistics?). One of those twenty, a research student burrowing towards his doctorate, may read the poem because he is interested in Delany. A few others of those twenty

claimed as Cynewulf's by probably the majority of English scholars, though it is possible that he worked on older material. At the same time, we have none but aesthetic evidence to go upon. A resemblance has been fancied or detected between the reference to the cross in the concluding portion of *Elene* discussed above and the subject and treatment of this poem. It would be possible to overrate the value of this coincidence. References to the cross are frequent in both prose and verse. They need prove nothing beyond the undoubtedly early custom of the adoration. At the same time, the two poems have much in common: the character of the intimate self-revelation contained in each, the elegiac tone of the reflections on the transitoriness of the world and the sinfulness of man, the phraseology and syntactical structure are alike to a degree which makes the Cynewulfian authorship of both more than probable. *The Dream of the Rood* is the choicest blossom of Old English Christian poetry; religious feeling has never been more exquisitely clothed than in these one hundred and forty lines of alliterative verse. It is full of imaginative power and enters deeply into the mysteries of sin and of sorrow. We have no other instance of a dream-poem in pre-Conquest England, though Bede relates several visions. The poet dreamt a dream and in it saw the holy rood decked with gems and shining gloriously. Angels guarded it, and, at its sight, the singer was afeared, for he was stained with guilt. As he watched, the tree changed colour; anon it was adorned with treasure, anon stained with gore; and, as he watched, it spoke, and told the story of the crucifixion, the descent from the cross, the resurrection. This conception of the cross as being gifted with power of speech lends a singular charm to the poem. The address is followed by the poet's reflection on what he has seen: the cross shall be henceforth his confidence and help. The concluding ten lines of the poem seem superfluous and are possibly a later accretion. The theme concludes with line 146. The characteristic opening of the

all, may have been the sculptor's autograph. In no case could it, apparently, be a reference to the poet Caedmon, for the language of the poem on the Ruthwell cross is younger than that of the MS poem, possibly of the tenth century. The decoration of the cross, also, is thought to be too elaborate and ornate for eighth century work and can hardly be dated much earlier than the tenth century. See Chapter II *ante* and the bibliography to that chapter, especially the writings of Victor and A. S. Cook, *The Dream of the Rood*.

A somewhat similar, though very short, example of an inscription in the first person is preserved on a cross at Brussels:—

Rod is min nama · geo ic ricne cyning
baer byfigende, blode bestemed.

III

When concluding his notes to the *Iliad*, Pope thanked his assistants, one of whom had been Thomas Parnell:

I must end these Notes by discharging my Duty to two of my Friends, which is the more an indispensable piece of Justice, as the one of them is since dead: The Merit of their Kindness to me will appear infinitely the greater, as the Task they undertook was in its own nature of much more Labour, than either Pleasure or Reputation. The larger part of the Extracts from *Eustathius*, together with several excellent Observations were sent me by Mr. *Broome:* And the whole Essay upon *Homer* was written upon such Memoirs as I had collected, by the late Dr. *Parnell*, Archdeacon of *Clogher* in *Ireland:* How very much that Gentleman's Friendship prevail'd over his Genius, in detaining a Writer of his Spirit in the Drudgery of removing the Rubbish of past Pedants, will soon appear to the World, when they shall see those beautiful Pieces of Poetry the Publication[1] of which he left to my Charge, almost with his dying Breath.

This note was dated 25 March 1720, and the publication of the volume of the *Iliad* containing it followed on 12 May. Parnell had died some eighteen months earlier, in October 1718. The two poets had been close friends, and in the December of that year Pope told a friend that Parnell's death 'was . . . much in my mind', and that

to [his] memory I am erecting the best monument I can. What he gave me to publish, was but a small part of what he left behind him; but it was the best, and I will not make it worse by enlarging it.[2]

While preparing the monument Pope must have taken seriously the commission which, early in 1719, Swift conveyed to him through Charles Ford:

I think Pope should bestow a few Verses on his friend Parnels memory, especially if it is intended (as I think I have heard,) that some of Parnels scattered Things are to be published together.[3]

[1] Pope, as Professor Griffith has said, was the best business man among the English poets. Here he is giving his projected volume a puff of 'advance publicity'. But if he is encouraging readers, he is not deceiving them: the poems were indeed 'beautiful', and are so still.

[2] *The Works of Alexander Pope*, ed. Elwin and Courthope (1872), viii. 28.

[3] *Letters of Jonathan Swift to Charles Ford*, ed. D. Nichol Smith (1935), p. 74.

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Rod is min nama ʒeo ic ricne cyninʒ
baer byfiʒende, blode bestemed.

not do this, you may depend upon a total Suppression of these Verses (the only Copy whereof I send you). But you never shall suppress that Great, sincere, & entire, Admiration & Respect, with which I am always | My Lord, | Your most faithful, most o- | bedient, & most humble Servant, | A. Pope.

To which Harley replied:

Brampton-Castle, Nov. 6. 1721.

S^r

I received your Packet by the Carrier, which could not but give me great Pleasure, to see you preserve an Old Friend in Memory: for it must needs be very agreable to be Remembred by those we highly Value. But then, how much Shame did it cause me! When I read your fine Verses inclos'd, my Mind reproach'd me how far short I came of what your great Friendship & delicate Pen would partially describe me. You ask my Consent to Publish it; to what Streights doth This reduce me! I look back, indeed, to those Evenings I have usefully & pleasantly spent with M^r Pope, M^r Parnel, Dean Swift, the Doctor,[1] &c. I should be glad the World knew you admitted me to your Friendship: and, since your Affection is too hard for your Judgement, I am contented to let the World see, how well M^r Pope can write upon a barren Subject. I return you an exact Copy of the Verses, that I may keep the Original, as a Testimony of the Only Error you have been guilty of. I hope very speedily to Embrace you in London, and to assure you of the particular Esteem & Friendship wherewith I am | S^r | Your most faithful | & most humble Servant | Oxford.

I keep the Printed Paper, because I think | you have more of them.[2]

Here is the text of the dedication as Pope printed it (pp. 65–7):[3]

[1] Dr. Arbuthnot.

[2] I print the text of these two letters by kind permission of the Marquess of Bath. I owe my text of them to the kindness of Professor Sherburn.

[3] The text of the poem as Harley received it in manuscript is as follows (pp. 65–7):

author, since a copy of the book was contained in Alcuin's library at York, and Cynewulf may very well have been a scholar in the school at York[1]. The second part of the poem, the allegorical application of the myth to Christ, is based on the writings of Ambrose and Bede. The characteristic feature of the poem is its love of colour and wealth of gorgeous descriptive epithets. Especially noteworthy, in this respect, is the description of the land where the phoenix dwells:

Winsome is the wold there; there the wealds are green,
Spacious spread below the skies; there may neither snow nor rain,
Nor the furious air of frost, nor the flare of fire,
Nor the headlong squall of hail, nor the hoar-frost's fall,
Nor the burning of the sun, nor the bitter cold,
Nor the weather over-warm, nor the winter shower,
Do their wrong to any wight—but the wold abides
Ever happy, healthful there[2].

This passage illustrates not only the feeling of English poets towards nature, but also the development that took place in consequence of the influence of Latin letters. The Northumbrian poets were not unskilled in the depiction of scenes with which they were familiar; but in *The Phoenix* we have, for the first time, a poet attempting, under literary influence, and with an obviously conscious striving after artistic effect, to paint an ideal landscape, the beauty and gentleness of summer climes, the wealth of tropical nature, the balminess of a softer air, where there shall be no more, or only a sun-lit, sea, unlike the sullen gloom of the northern waters.

The conclusion of the poem is of an unusual kind. It consists of eleven lines in a mixture of English and Latin, the first half of each line being English, the second half Latin, the Latin alliterating with the English.

Portions of an Old English *Physiologus* have also been attributed to Cynewulf. Allegorical bestiaries were a favourite form of literature from the fifth century down to the Middle Ages. *They consisted of descriptions of certain beasts, birds and* fishes which were considered capable of an allegorical significance. The allegorical meaning was always attached to the description, much as a moral is appended to a fable. The development of this form of literature was due to the fondness for animal symbolism characteristic of early Christian art. Only three specimens of such descriptions are extant in Old English literature. They deal with the panther, the whale and the partridge. The panther is

[1] Cook, *Christ*, p. lxiv.

[2] Stopford Brooke's version.

Recall those Nights that clos'd thy toilsom Days,
Still hear thy *Parnell* in his living Lays:
Who careless, now, of Int'rest, Fame, or Fate,
Perhaps forgets that OXFORD e'er was Great;
Or deeming meanest what we greatest call,
Beholds thee glorious only in thy Fall.
  And sure if ought below the Seats Divine
Can touch Immortals, 'tis a Soul like thine:
A Soul supreme, in each hard Instance try'd,
Above all Pain, all Anger, and all Pride,
The Rage of Pow'r, the Blast of publick Breath,
The Lust of Lucre, and the Dread of Death.
  In vain to Desarts thy Retreat is made;
The Muse attends thee to the silent Shade:
'Tis hers, the brave Man's latest Steps to trace,
Re-judge his Acts, and dignify Disgrace.
When Int'rest calls off all her sneaking Train,
When all th' Oblig'd desert, and all the Vain;
She waits, or to the Scaffold, or the Cell,
When the last ling'ring Friend has bid farewel.
Ev'n now she shades thy Evening Walk with Bays,
(No Hireling she, no Prostitute to Praise)
Ev'n now, observant of the parting Ray,

Still think on those gay Nights of toilsome Days,
Still hear thy Parnell in his living Lays;
Who careless now of Int'rest, Fame, or Fate,
Perhaps forgets that Oxford e'er was Great;
Or deeming meanest what we greatest call,
Beholds thee glorious only in thy Fall.
  Yet sure, if ought below the Seats divine
Can touch Immortals, 'tis a Soul like thine:
A Soul supream, in each hard Instance try'd,
Above all Pain, all Anger, and all Pride,
The Rage of Pow'r, the Blast of publick Breath,
The Lust of Lucre, and the Dread of Death.
  In vain to Desarts thy Retreat is made;
Fame, and the Muse, pursue thee to the Shade.
'Tis theirs, the Brave man's latest steps to trace,
Re-judge his Acts, and dignify Disgrace,
Wait, to the Scaffold, or the silent Cell,
When the last lingring Friend has bid farewell.
Tho' In'trest calls off all her sneaking Train,
Tho' next the Servile drop thee, next the Vain,
Tho distanc't one by one th' Oblig'd desert,
And ev'n the Grateful are but last to part;
My Muse attending strews thy path with Bays,
(A Virgin Muse, not prostitute to praise),
She still with pleasure eyes thy Evening Ray,

each other, the nightingale and the swan, the plough guided by the "grey-haired enemy of the wood," the bull breaking up the clods left unturned by the plough, the falcon, the arm-companion of aethelings—scenes, events, characters familiar in the England of that day. Riddle XLI, *De Creatura*, and Riddle IX, on the Nightingale, which are subjects taken from Aldhelm, may be compared with the Latin versions to prove how far the more imaginative English poet was from being a mere imitator, and the storm and iceberg riddles breathe the old northern and viking spirit. Riddle XXXVI is also preserved in Northumbrian in a MS at Leyden.

The most varied solutions have, from time to time, been suggested for some of the riddles, and the meaning of many is by no means clear. The most recent attempts at a solution of the first riddle have been made by Schofield and Gollancz. They see in this short poem an Old English monodrama in five acts, wherein a lady boasts of fidelity to her lover, but, during his absence, proves faithless and lives to endure the vengeance of her husband in the loss of her child.

We may note, in conclusion, a group of minor poems which have one characteristic feature in common, namely, the note of personal religion; they are, for the most part, lyric or didactic in character, dealing with the soul's need of redemption. Of these, the *Death Song* attributed to Bede by his pupil Cuthbert, who gives an approximate Latin rendering of it[1], is preserved in a Northumbrian version in a MS at St Gall and belongs to the same period as Caedmon's *Hymn*.

One of the most interesting of the group is the *Address of the Lost Soul to the Body*, a frequent theme in later literature. It is one of the very few Old English poems preserved in two versions, one in the *Exeter*, the other in the *Vercelli, Book*. In the latter codex is contained a fragment of a very rare theme, the *Address of the Saved Soul to the Body*. A poem on the day of doom is transmitted in the *Exeter Book*. It is a general admonition to lead a godly, righteous and sober life after the fashion of many similar warnings in later literature.

A group of four short poems, of which three are preserved in the *Exeter Book*, deal with attributes common to mankind. The *Gifts of Men* (Bi monna craeftum)—based, largely, upon the 29th homily of pope Gregory, and, hence, sometimes attributed to Cynewulf; the *Fates of Men* (Bi manna wyrdum), which, though allied in theme to the previous poem, differs very considerably from it

[1] Epistola Cuthberti ad Cuthwinum.

There was art here, or, to begin with, the needs of the metre would not have been met; and better art in the revision. But we cannot explain it. The finger can touch it a little more certainly when we find that

Above all Pain, all Anger, and all Pride

becomes, when reprinted in the *Works* of 1735 (where the Epistle is given pride of place)

Above all Pain, all Passion, and all Pride.

But though surer, our explanation is not more than superficial. When, however, we turn from the clauses and phrases of the poem to its structure, we meet an art which is more readily tangible. An argument has a course: we may be able to discuss sequence and relationship when we cannot discuss the nature of what it is that is sequential or related. How much, then, can we say of the sequence and relationships of Pope's poem?

I have suggested that when Swift proposed that Pope should write the 'few Verses', he had in mind those few of Dryden's on the death of Oldham; and there can be no doubt that at some point, or points, Pope had. The occasion was similar: the great poet mourning the untimely loss of the smaller poet who had become his friend. Certainly Pope echoed Dryden's poem, both echoing Virgil.[1] But, as we might expect, Pope compresses Dryden's poem into 'few Verses' indeed:

Such were the Notes,[2] thy once-lov'd Poet sung,
'Till Death untimely stop'd his tuneful Tongue.

[1] Cf. with Pope's

Oh just beheld, and lost! admir'd, and mourn'd!

Dryden's

Farewell, too little and too lately known.

Both recall Virgil's lines on Marcellus, *Æneid*, vi. 870 f.:

Ostendent terris hunc tantum fata nec ultra
Esse sinent. . . .

which Dryden had translated with

This Youth (the blissful Vision of a day)
Shall just be shown on Earth, and snatch'd away.

Dryden had also referred to Oldham as Marcellus:

Once more, hail, and farewell! farewell, thou young,
But ah! too short, *Marcellus* of our Tongue.

[2] 'Such . . .': Pope was publishing only a selection from the pieces Parnell left him, that made in the first place by Parnell (see p. 62 above). The rest that were in his possession Pope kept by him till his death, when Spence pleaded in vain against their destruction. Some, or all, of these poems existed in one or more other

Cambridge. King Solomon, as the representative of Jewish wisdom, is represented as measuring forces with Saturn, a docile learner and mild disputant. The Old English dialogue has its counterpart in more than one literature, but, in other countries, Marcolf, who takes the place of Saturn, gets the best of the game, and saucy wit confounds the teacher.

Any attempt to estimate the development attained by Old English literature, as shown by the work of the two schools of poetry which the names of Caedmon and Cynewulf connote, must, of necessity, be somewhat superficial, in view of the fragmentary nature of much of the work passed under review. Caedmon stands for a group of singers whose work we feel to be earlier in tone and feeling, though not always in age, than that which we know to be Cynewulf's or can fairly attribute to him. Both schools of thought are Christian, not rarely even monkish; both writers, if not in equal measure, are sons of their age and, palpably, inheritors of a philosophy of life pagan in many respects. It is safe to say that, in both groups, there is hardly a single poem of any length and importance in which whole passages are not permeated with the spirit of the untouched *Beowulf*, in which turns of speech, ideas, points of view, do not recall an earlier, a fiercer, a more self-reliant and fatalistic age. God the All-Ruler is fate metamorphosed; the powers of evil are identical with those once called giants and elves; the Paradise and Hell of the Christian are as realistic as the Walhalla and the Niflheim of the heathen ancestor.

Yet the work of Cynewulf and his school marks an advance upon the writings of the school of Caedmon. Even the latter is, at times, subjective and personal in tone to a degree not found in pure folk-epic; but in Cynewulf the personal note is emphasised and becomes lyrical. Caedmon's hymn in praise of the Creator is a sublime statement of generally recognised facts calling for universal acknowledgment in suitably exalted terms, Cynewulf's confessions in the concluding portion of *Elene* or in *The Dream of the Rood*, or his vision of the day of judgment in *Crist*, are lyrical outbursts, spontaneous utterances of a soul which has become one with its subject and to which self-revelation is a necessity. This advance shows itself frequently, also, in the de- scriptions of nature. For Cynewulf, "earth's crammed with heave[n] and every common bush afire with God"; it is, perhaps, only [in] portions of *Exodus* and in passages of *Genesis* B that the Di[vine] immanence in nature is obviously felt by the Caedmonian sc[hool]

once. Harley, whose name and title had been emblazoned at the head of the poem in large capitals, intrudes even into the few lines that are all that Parnell is allowed. Parnell is 'thy' poet;[1] he has been 'beheld' and 'admir'd' by Harley, and is now 'lost' and 'mourn'd' by him. But so far, at least, the relationship has been fairly level: if Harley has his capitals and his pervasiveness, Parnell has his concise, warm, bright praise. The first paragraph ends, however, with the balance tilted in favour of Harley:

. . . to HARLEY dear—in vain!

(At the moment I am not concerned with the significance of the typography.)

The bright Parnell is already diminished, but he persists farther into the poem, even as far as into its third paragraph. In the second, however, he suffers an almost total eclipse. His relationship with Harley, which is given its concisest expression in 'him, thou', dims beside a new relationship, that between Harley and another survivor, Swift, whom Pope signalizes as greater than Parnell simply by the place he gives his name in the line and the place of the line in the paragraph:

For him, . . .
For *Swift* and him, . . .

(Again, I am not yet concerned with the significance of the typography.) The Parnell–Harley relationship persists into the third paragraph in 'Absent or dead', Swift being the absent friend, Parnell the dead—Swift had last seen Harley just before his fall in 1714. (The transition between these paragraphs is as firm as any in Pope: 'Absent or dead' quietly carried Swift and Parnell over the second chasm, just as the 'For him' had quietly carried over the first all that had been so far said of Parnell.) In those three words, however, the Parnell–Swift and the Swift–Harley relationships cease, survived by that between Harley and Parnell, which suddenly blazes to its height. Even Parnell, now on his last appearance, has a flash of splendour, as the author of 'Lays' which are 'living' (Pope had put on his title-page the words from Horace, 'Dignum laude virum Musa vetat

[1] The affixing of the possessive pronoun to the proper name indicates, expecially since the name is that of a poet, that a precious thing is being treasured against the possible attacks of barbarians. Milton had showed the power of the possessive in 'What needs my Shakespeare for his honour'd bones.'

CHAPTER V

LATIN WRITINGS IN ENGLAND TO THE TIME OF ALFRED

It is outside the scope of this work to survey the various scattered documents of British origin which were produced outside Britain. Moreover, the influence of most of them upon the main stream of English literature was, beyond all doubt, extremely slight. Among the writings thus excluded from consideration may be mentioned the remains of Pelagius, who seems to have been actually the earliest British author, the short tract of Fastidius, "a British bishop," on the Christian life, and the two wonderful books of St Patrick—the *Confession* and the *Letter to Coroticus*—which, in spite of their barbaric style, whereof the author was fully conscious, are among the most living and attractive monuments of ancient Christianity. Outside our province also falls the earliest piece of Latin verse produced in these islands, the *Hymn of St Secknall*; and also the hymns of the Bangor antiphonary, the writings of Columban and the lives and remains of the Irish missionaries abroad. All these are named here principally lest it should be supposed that they have been forgotten.

We pass to our earliest indigenous literary products; and the list of these is headed by two somewhat uncouth fragments, marked off from almost all that follow them by the fact that they are British and not English in origin. These are the book of Gildas and the *History of the Britons*.

Concerning the career of Gildas the Wise, we are told much in the lives of him by a monk of Rhuys, and by Caradoc of Lancarvan, which belong respectively to the early part of the eleventh century and to the twelfth; but almost all the data that can be regarded as trustworthy are derived from Gildas's own book and from brief notices in Irish and Welsh annals. As examined by Zimmer and Theodor Mommsen, these sources tell us that Gildas, born about the year 500 A.D., was living in the west of England and

Between the last two paragraphs the force of the transition is quiet. It is still a transition affecting the emotions: the urgency of the 'And sure' is past, and quiet emotion simmers in its 'In vain', words heavy for Pope's first readers with the *nequiquams* of the Roman poets. But though 'made of' emotion, the transition is one of arrangement. The first two words of the last paragraph repeat the last two of the first:

. . . in vain! . . .
In vain . . . .

They are beautifully in place. Their quietness is also necessary to separate the preceding climax from that with which the poem closes.

V

The plan of the poem is also observable in its words taken as units, even in its typography.

Look first at its use of the word 'great'. The first appearance of this word is when Pope, not content with dubbing public affairs a 'Farce', also dubs them

The sober Follies of the Wise and Great.

In such a context 'Great' means no more than 'highly placed'. At meetings of the Scriblerus Club, so potent was the charm of Swift's irony that statesmanship appeared temporarily as no fit work for the wise: when you did get an odd case, such as Harley's, of a man not only 'great' but wise, then his political duties seemed one of his comical weaknesses, perhaps disguised from himself, as from the public, by its soberness.[1] On its second and third appearances in the poem, the word 'great' has the same meaning: Parnell, now among the immortals,

Perhaps forgets that OXFORD e'er was Great;
Or deeming meanest what we greatest call,
Beholds thee glorious only in thy Fall.

[1] Pope's meaning was missed by Gilbert Wakefield: 'There seems to my judgement an incongruity in this association of characters. Should [Pope] not have written,

The sober follies of the *proud* and great?

no otherwise distinguishable from the *freaks* of *Bedlamites*, than as acted by men not literally frantic' (*The Works of Alexander Pope*, 1794, p. 285). Pope is adapting to new ends a common phrase of the time: Joseph Trapp in his poem 'To the Right Honourable Mr. Harley, On His appearing in Publick after the Wound given Him

to the lowest level of degradation. In the pages that follow, he attacks, successively and by name, five of the princes of the west: Constantine of Devon and Cornwall, Aurelius Caninus, whose sphere of influence is unknown, Vortipor of Pembrokeshire, Cuneglasus, king of an unnamed territory and the "dragon of the isle," Maglocunus, who is known to have reigned over Anglesey and to have died in the year 547. Each of these is savagely reproached with his crimes—sacrilege, perjury, adultery and murder—and each is, in milder terms, entreated to return to the ways of peace.

Up to this point the epistle is of great interest, though tantalising from its lack of precise detail. It now becomes far less readable. The whole of the remainder is, practically, a *cento* of biblical quotations, gathering together the woes pronounced in Scripture against evil princes and evil priests, and the exhortations found therein for their amendment. The picture which the author draws of the principate and of the clergy is almost without relief in its blackness. He does just allow that there are a few good priests; but corruption, worldliness and vice are rampant among the majority.

That Gildas was convinced of the urgency of his message there is no room to doubt. Like Elijah at Horeb, he feels that he is left alone, a prophet of the Lord; and every word he writes comes from his heart. Yet, if we are certain of his sincerity, we are at least equally confident that his picture must be too darkly coloured. We have complained that he lacks precision: it must be added that he loves adjectives, and adjectives in the superlative degree. Doubtless Salonius and Sagittarius, the wicked bishops of Gap and Embrun, of whom Gregory of Tours has so much to say, had their counterparts in Britain: but there were also St Iltut, St David and many another, renowned founders of schools and teachers of the young, whose labours cannot have been wholly fruitless.

In style, Gildas is vigorous to the point of turgidity. His breathless periods are often wearisome and his epithets multitudinous. Perhaps the most pleasant sample of his writing is the paragraph in which he enumerates with an ardent and real affection the beauties of Britain. In a few instances he shows that tendency to adorn his page with rare and difficult words which seems to have had a great attraction for the Celtic mind.

It is evident that he considers himself a Roman citizen in some sense. To him, Latin is "our tongue," as opposed to English; and

leaves the ground clear for typography that matters. Harley is distinguished by ordinary initial caps. and small caps. ('HARLEY' and 'OXFORD') until his final appearance in large caps. as 'MORTIMER'. The typography, however, is only a second string to Pope's bow. By good fortune Pope's dedicatee had four names clustered in an 'extraordinarily worded Earldom':[1] Baron Harley of Wigmore (the ancient seat of the Mortimers, in Herefordshire, the 'Desarts' of the poem), Earl of Oxford, and Earl Mortimer. Pope makes use of three of them (to have used the fourth, Wigmore, would have been pedantic—no one used it). When he is speaking of Harley as the friend of Parnell and Swift, he uses his family name, the name representing him as a human being on a level with other human beings born with the names Parnell and Swift. When he is speaking of Harley as holding high office, he gives him the name which, after his elevation to the peerage in 1711, was in general use, the name 'Oxford'. But Harley had also the title Mortimer. He had been given it for fear that claimants to the Oxford title still survived—it had become extinct as recently as 1702. The further title had been extinct much longer. At the time Harley acquired the title Oxford, lawyers had called that name 'the noblest in the land'.[2] But the associations of 'Mortimer' were nobler still: it sounded nobler, and had nobler literary connotations. Who could forget that line of Mortimer's soliloquy in *1 Henry VI*:

> Here dies the dusky torch of Mortimer,

or the two epistles passing between an earlier Mortimer and Queen Isabel in Drayton's still-popular *England's Heroical Epistles*? Moreover, the latter Mortimer was the hero of Drayton's *Barons' Wars*, entitled in its first form *Mortimeriados*. So in the last line of the poem 'OXFORD' gives place to 'MORTIMER'. This climax of Pope's must be brief, if it is to fit a poem in which so much has found a place—contrast the ending of the overture to *Ruy Blas* where Mendelssohn reiterates the tonic chord, and that the chord of C major, through fifteen bars of common time. To attain brevity Pope uses every device he has. If we had been given 'Oxford' we should have missed both the almost brandishable sonority of 'Mortimer' and its connotations of heroic greatness.

[1] G. E. C., *The Complete Peerage* (1945), x. 264. [2] Op. cit., p. 262.

document or group of documents, the date and provenance of which it would be very interesting to settle.

In its latter portion, where it enumerates the various parts of the body, *Lorica* is, to a large extent, a collection of the most obscure foreign and archaic words which the author could scrape together. Hebrew, Greek and Latin are mingled in a most curious way, and are so disguised and corrupted that, in many cases, we are only able to divine their meaning by the help of glosses. It may be allowable to quote a single line—

gygram cephalem cum laris et conas—

which is said to mean

head, head with hair and eyes.

The other group of writings in which a similarly extraordinary vocabulary occurs is represented principally by the work called *Hisperica Famina*, which we possess in more than one text. It is arranged in a series of sections, numbering in all somewhat over 600 lines, of a kind of assonant non-metrical structure. Each line usually consists of two parts. The first part contains one or two epithets, and the verb and subject are in the second part. Each section contains a description of some scene or object—the day's work, the sea, fire, the wind, a chapel, an encounter with robbers. The writer is evidently a member of something like a [illegible] school; and all that we can certainly say of his [illegible] that he is brought into contact with Irish people, [illegible] distinctly mentioned in the text.

It is impossible to give any idea of the obs[illegible] *Famina* without quoting or translating pass[illegible] short of the genius of Sir Thomas Urquh[illegible] lents for the amazing words used by the [illegible] is evident, that the same school produced [illegible] *Famina*. Was that school located in [illegible] Gildas be author of *Lorica*, it follows [illegible] author of *Hisperica Famina* was a [illegible] in a south Welsh school such as th[illegible] settled in Ireland, where he [illegible] case we must place him in the [illegible] dence which points in this [illegible] hymn attributed to St Col[illegible] contains very marked spec[illegible]n composition is really of [illegible] ar editors; and, if that be [illegible]

They can only seem incompletely honest to those who are blinded by the blaze of the climax praising the 'Soul like thine'. But, of course, to make that praise blind us was Pope's aim. Praise of that degree is implied as a hoped-for possibility in any dedicatory poem, as a probability in any dedicatory poem by a major poet. In trying to rise to a great occasion, a poet has to see the occasion as even greater than it is. Being a poem, it must go all out, at least at its climax. If at that point the poet vacillates, his very metre rots. But there may be a simpler explanation of the effect produced by those four lines: it may be due to Pope's describing sublime virtue in terms of its opposite. He does not tell us what Harley's soul was, but what it was 'beyond', and he therefore turns to the things in a politician that men hate, things that prompt in all but some of the saintly a vivider emotion. Pope knew that his panegyric was better poetry—better because more fiercely sensuous—for turning round from virtue and facing instead

The strong Antipathy of Good [, the] Bad.[1]

Pope, then, does blind us with his climax of praise. But though the soul of Harley as a politician is seen as perfect, Pope's vision of it is arrived at by selection rather than by fabrication. To see that this is so, we have only to consult the writings of Swift. For all his disappointment at Harley's failure to get him the post of historiographer and no nearer glory than the deanery of St. Patrick's, Swift saw to it that nothing prevented his reporting the cause of Harley aright to his own age and to posterity. The hard work he put in as historian and critic of that administration has the purposiveness of a campaign. And though Swift's praise of Harley lacks the sensuous glow of Pope's, it is not less superlative. For Swift Harley was, to choose only four of his judgements, 'the most fearless man alive',[2] 'the utter despiser of money for himself',[3] 'the humblest of men in the height of his power',[4] and 'Fear, cruelty, avarice, and pride, are wholly strangers to his nature'.[5] Swift's bequest to Pope of his miniature of Harley marks the closeness of their views on its subject.

[1] *The Epilogue to the Satires*, Dialogue II, 198.
[2] *The Journal to Stella*, ed. H. Williams (1948), p. 206.
[3] *Correspondence*, ed. F. E. Ball (1910), i. 280.
[4] Quoted by E. S. Roscoe, *Robert Harley* (1902), p. 198.
[5] *Prose Works*, ed. Temple Scott (1902), x. 93 f.

knowledge of Vergil, Caesar, Isidore, and a map resembling the *Peutinger Table*, are forthcoming.

Of the authors to whom the book was known in early times it is only necessary to name two. In all probability, Bede was acquainted with it, though he does not mention it as having been one of his sources of information. Geoffrey of Monmouth made fairly extensive use of it. The copy which he had evidently attributed the authorship to Gildas, as do three at least of our extant manuscripts.

It is hardly possible to speak of the *History* as possessing a distinctive style. Where the author attempts a detailed narrative, his manner reminds us of the historical portions of the Old Testament. The books of *Chronicles*, with their mixture of genealogy and story, afford a near and familiar parallel.

If we possessed the whole of the revision by Nennius in its Latin form, we should most likely find that he had infused into it something of the learned manner beloved of his race and age. At least, his preface and his verses indicate this. Greek and Hebrew words occur in the verses, and one set of them is so written that the initials of the words form an alphabet. The original author of the *History* had no such graces. His best passage is the well-known tale of Vortigern.

Within a generation after the death of Gildas the Roman mission came to Kent, and the learning of the Latins, secular as well as sacred, was brought within reach of the English. The seventh century saw them making copious use of this enormous gift, and Latin literature flourished in its new and fertile soil.

Probably the coming of archbishop Theodore and abbot Hadrian to Canterbury in the year 668 was the event which contributed more than any other to the progress of education in England. The personalities of these two men, both versed in Greek as well as in Latin learning, determined, at least at first, the quality and complexion of the literary output of the country. But theirs was not the only strong influence at work. In the first place, the fashion of resorting to Ireland for instruction was very prevalent among English students; in the second place, the intercourse between England and Rome was incessant. Especially was this the case in the monasteries of the north. To take a single famous instance: five times did Benedict Biscop, abbot of Wearmouth, journey from Britain to Rome, and, on each occasion, he returned laden with books and artistic treasures. A less familiar example may also be cited. Cuthwin, bishop of the east Angles

POPE AND THE SISTER ARTS

ROBERT J. ALLEN

POPE's interest in painting has been widely recognized by his biographers and critics, from Joseph Spence to Mr. Sherburn. They have described in some detail his relationship, as friend and pupil, with the painter Charles Jervas, and have extracted from his letters the story of his reluctant but amused abandonment of the idea that he might excel with brush and pencil. A number of critics, including Mr. Austin Warren and Miss Elizabeth Manwaring, have suggested interesting relationships between Pope's experience with painting as an art and his own literary practices as critic and poet. But even Joseph Warton, who 'beats this ample field' as thoroughly as any, has little to say about painting as a source of poetic imagery. Like the others, Warton concentrates his attention on a few of the parallels in theory which bound the two arts together, and on the effect of late Renaissance painting on Pope's pictorialism.

Although some repetition must be involved in considering Pope's use of imagery from painting, the study is revealing on a number of counts. It shows the extent to which Pope was conscious of and interested in the technique, as opposed to the critical theory, of painting; it illuminates his special habits as a practitioner in imagery; and it furnishes an interesting sidelight on the nature of Pope's conventionality and that of his time.

That the comparison between the art of the painter and the art of the poet was a commonplace during the eighteenth century hardly needs proof. Horace's *Ars Poetica* opens with such a comparison, adds another within thirty lines, and near the end contains the famous passage translated as follows by the Earl of Roscommon:

> Poems (like Pictures) are of different Sorts,
> Some better at a distance, others near,
> Some love the dark, some chuse the clearest light,
> And boldly challenge the most piercing Eye,
> Some please for once, some will for ever please.[1]

[1] *Horace's Art of Poetry* (1680), p. 25.

from Hadrian. There is, practically, nothing to show that he knew Hebrew, and we need not spend time in examining the remark about Vergil. In spite of this and similar exaggerations, the fact remains that Aldhelm's learning is really very great for his time.

The writings of his which we possess are the following:

1. A number of letters. 2. A prose treatise on the praise of virginity. 3. A versification, in hexameters, of the same treatise. 4. A prose book on the number seven and on metres, especially the hexameter, containing also a collection of one hundred riddles in verse. 5. Occasional poems, principally inscriptions for altars or the like.

Of the letters (several of which have been preserved among the correspondence of St Boniface) two are of particular interest. The first of these, addressed to the Welsh king Geraint, complains of the irregularities of the British clergy in regard to the form of the tonsure and the observance of Easter, and of their unchristian attitude towards the English clergy, with whom they refuse to hold any intercourse. It warns the king of the dangers incurred by those who are out of communion with the church of Peter, and begs him to use his influence in favour of union. The style and vocabulary of this letter are unusually plain and straightforward. Few words appear to be inserted simply for the sake of adorning the page. It is a sincere and business-like document.

The other offers a wide contrast. It is written to one Eahfrid on his return from Ireland, whither he had gone for purposes of study, and is intended to show that equally good teaching could be obtained in England. With this in view, Aldhelm pours out all the resources of an extremely rich and varied vocabulary upon his correspondent. In the opening lines the figure of alliteration is employed to an alarming extent: out of sixteen consecutive words fifteen begin with *p*. Once or twice, the writer breaks without rime or reason into Greek (the phrase *ad doxam onomatis kyrii* is a good example); and Latinised Greek words stud the text, together with unfamiliar Latin. Elaborate passages of metaphor, too, occur—one about bees, of which Aldhelm is specially fond—and the whole affords as concentrated a sample of the author's "learned" style as it is possible to find in a small compass. An interesting feature in the theme is a panegyric on Theodore and Hadrian, who are extolled as capable of routing and putting to shame all the scholars of Ireland.

It is evident that this letter was much admired, for it survives

poet's.[1] Charles Jervas was equally happy in the relationship. Pope's epistle *To Mr. Jervas*, which is full of their artistic kinship as painter and poet, was first published in 1716. In the same year, when he joined with Gay, Arbuthnot, and Pope in writing to Thomas Parnell, Jervas attempted a witty apology for contributing to the letter in the following terms:

> Though my proportion of this epistle should be but a sketch in miniature, yet I take up half of this page. . . . The poets will give you lively descriptions in their way; I shall only acquaint you with that which is directly in my province.

Then, alluding to a picture, probably of Martha and Teresa Blount, which he had just finished painting, he went on:

> I have just set the last hand to a couplet, for so I may call two nymphs in one piece. . . . He [Pope] has been so unreasonable as to expect that I should have made them as beautiful upon canvas as he had done upon paper.[2]

The reference to the picture as a couplet suggests not only that Jervas was prepared to think of his art in terms of poetry, but also that drawing parallels between the two arts was so familiar a practice that it had become a game.

Since painters and poets alike had come to accept the kinship of the sister arts, it is not surprising to find Pope making extensive use of painting in his imagery. Indeed, he was inclined to enlarge the conception of the sister arts, as Jonathan Richardson was, to include sculpture, architecture, and music. Describing 'Leo's golden days', near the end of *An Essay on Criticism*, he wrote:

> The sculpture and her sister-arts revive;
> Stones leaped to form, and rocks began to live;
> With sweeter notes each rising temple rung;
> A Raphael painted, and a Vida sung.

A considerable number of images derived from these arts are scattered through his poems,[3] and gardening and the decorative arts are also frequent sources of imagery, the latter usually with suggestions of pretty triviality. He even used, in the *Dunciad*,[4] one fairly elaborate comparison drawn from the art of tapestry-

[1] *The Works of Jonathan Richardson* (1792), pp. 6–15, *et passim*.
[2] Pope, *Works*, ed. Elwin-Courthope, vii. 458–9. Cf. ibid. viii. 5, 23.
[3] See, for example, *The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace*, ll. 43–8, 147–54.
[4] *Poems*, Twickenham ed., v. 302.

time addressed to an abbess Maxima, whose English name does not appear to be known. The arrangement of the poem coincides generally, but not exactly, with that of the prose book. The preliminary praise of virginity is shorter. Some examples (Thomas, Felix, Christina, Dorothea) are omitted, and a couple (Gervasius and Protasius, and Jerome) added.

After the story of Anatolia and Victoria the poem diverges from the prose and gives a description of the eight principal vices, modelled, not very closely, upon Prudentius's *Psychomachia*. It ends by deprecating criticism and by asking for the prayers of the reader.

The sources and style of these books are the chief matters which engage our attention. With regard to the sources of the prose treatise in particular, we see that Aldhelm had access to a very considerable library of Christian authors. It included (taking the citations as they occur in the text) an unidentified work in which an angel appears as speaker (not *The Shepherd of Hermas*), Isidore, Pseudo-Melito's *Passion of John, Acts of Thomas, Revelation of Paul* (in the fullest Latin text), *Recognitions of Clement, Acts of Sylvester*, Paulinus's *Life of Ambrose*, Sulpicius Severus, lives of Gregory and Basil, Athanasius's *Life of Antony, Vitae Patrum*, Gregory's *Dialogues*, Rufinus's version of Eusebius, Jerome's letter and his *Life of Malchus*, and an extensive collection of *Passions of Martyrs*. Among poets, Vergil and Prosper are prominent. In this enumeration only the obvious sources have been reckoned. A list of the books whose influence is perceptible in phrases or allusions would be of equal length.

The style recalls the intricate ornamentation of the Celtic manuscripts of the time. The thought is simple, as are the ingredients of the patterns in the manuscripts; but it is involved in exhausting periods, and wonderful words are dotted about in them like spangles. We have seen that, to some scholars in this age, learning meant chiefly the knowledge of strange words. Aldhelm is not free from this delusion. A fairly close rendering of a paragraph from the prose treatise will convey a better idea of his manner than many lines of description.

subtle pairing of the pictures, we are aware that we are being shown through a small gallery of history-paintings, done in the manner which the theorists admired. Pope's friend Richardson had insisted that 'every historical picture is a representation of one single point of time; this then must be chosen; and that in the story that is most advantageous must be it'.[1] Pope was adopting some such idea, and the image from painting with it, to develop his views on the changeableness and inconsistencies of women's characters. He concludes our tour of the paintings with an extraordinarily economical couplet (ll. 15–16), which both reaffirms his satiric intention and shifts his role from that of docent to that of painter. Our final preparation for the double portraits which are to follow is completed in the lines:

Come, then, the colours and the ground prepare!
Dip in the rainbow, trick her off in air;
Choose a firm cloud, before it fall, and in it
Catch, ere she change, the Cynthia of the minute.

The painter's colours become a rainbow, the rainbow becomes a cloud as insubstantial as Cynthia's own character, and in the satiric sketches which follow the analogy with paintings fades, though there are suggestions of it in the line, 'See Sin in state, majestically drunk', and in the allusions to 'Lucretia's dagger, Rosamonda's bowl'. After the brilliant character of Atossa, however, Pope resumes the metaphor in the lines:

Pictures like these, dear Madam, to design,
Asks no firm hand, and no unerring line;
Some wandering touches, some reflected light,
Some flying stroke alone can hit them right:
For how should equal colours do the knack?
Chameleons who can paint in white and black?

The last of these lines is as good as any to illustrate Pope's control of the image and his ability to make it serve his thematic ends, reminding us as it does that Pope is in reality neither painting in colour nor drawing in black and white but (and here our minds accept an interesting ambiguity) is writing words on paper. After dealing with Chloe Pope resumes the metaphor once more to praise the virtue and beauty of the Duchess of Queensberry. Here again he depends on the practice of the painter, in choosing and dressing his model, to

[1] *Works* (1792), p. 27.

exemplifications of the same tendency? As we have seen, Aldhelm's riddles were copiously imitated by Englishmen in later centuries[1].

We have seen something of the number of Latin authors who were known to Aldhelm. It may be added here that, in a letter to Hedda, bishop of Winchester, he describes himself, apparently, as engaged in the study of Roman law, and, certainly, as occupied with metres and with the science of astronomical calculation.

It would be interesting to be able to show that, besides knowing the Greek language (as we are sure he did), he possessed Greek books, apart from Latin versions; but it is not really possible to find much evidence to this effect. He once cites *Judith* "according to the Septuagint"; in another place he calls the *Acts of the Apostles* the *Praxàpostolos*; elsewhere he gives the name of a work of St Basil in Greek, and mentions Homer and Hesiod. Not much can be built on these small foundations. The probability is that he read Greek books when studying under Hadrian, but that in later life he possessed none of his own.

Summing up the literary work of Aldhelm, we find in him a good representative of the pupils of Theodore and Hadrian, on whom both Roman and Greek influences have been exercised; and we see in him also one for whom the grandiloquence of the Celt, the love of an out of the way vocabulary, of sound rather at the cost of sense, had great attraction. We cannot truly declare that the literature of the world would be much the poorer for the loss of his writings; but it is fair to say that there is in them, despite all their affectation, a great deal of freshness and vigour; that they are marked by the faults of youth rather than by those of senescence. That they were immensely popular we can see from the number of existing copies of the treatise on virginity and the letter to Aldfrith. Most of these are early and are distinguished by the beauty of their script. One, now at Lambeth, has a rather well-known frontispiece representing the author and a group of nuns.

Additional evidence of the importance of Aldhelm as a literary figure is afforded by the existence of what we may call the Aldhelmian school of English Latinists. The works of these are neither many in number nor large in compass; but the distribution of the writers covers a fairly considerable space both geographically and in time. Little attention has hitherto been

[1] See *ante*, Chapter IV, p. 60.

Charles I and William III chose Bernini and Kneller to immortalize their figures in stone and on canvas, the two kings immortalized their taste in poetry by pensioning Quarles and knighting Blackmore. As often happens in the *Imitations of Horace*, Pope is here using direct illustration rather than imagery; but he goes on to the general observation, based on a parallel between poetry and sculpture,

> Not with such Majesty, such bold relief,
> The Forms august of King, or conqu'ring Chief,
> E'er swell'd on Marble; as in Verse have shin'd
> (In polish'd Verse) the Manners and the Mind.[1]

The emphasis on the word 'polish'd', as applied to both marble and verse, concentrates the attention directly on the two arts being compared, and shows once more how insistently Pope demanded a full response to such parallels.

A more subtle bit of suggestion may be found in one of the coarsely comic passages of the *Dunciad*, where during the ceremonial games of Book II Dulness offers prizes for the unsanitary contest between Curll and Chetwood.[2] The consolation prize is a jordan made of china and so becomes a sort of mock-heroic *objet d'art*. The other prize is

> yon Juno of majestic size,
> With cow-like udders, and with ox-like eyes.

Even though Juno may be identified with Eliza Haywood, it is likely that 'yon Juno' is also meant to suggest a large mythological painting, probably of the Flemish School. Such a response is reinforced by the pseudo-Homeric term 'ox-like' as well as by the allusion to the engraved portrait by Kirkall in the preceding passage. In the methodology of burlesque Mrs. Haywood posed heroically as Juno is a fair equivalent for the jordan fashionably executed in china. A comparable bit of satiric imagery drawn from history-painting appears in one of the Horatian imitations, where Pope scornfully asks if Fortescue expects him, in order to gain the King's favour, to

> Rend with tremendous Sound your ears asunder
> With Gun, Drum, Trumpet, Blunderbus & Thunder?
> Or nobly wild, with *Budgell's* Fire and Force,
> Paint Angels trembling round his *falling Horse*?[3]

[1] *Poems*, Twickenham ed., iv. 227, 29. [2] Ibid. v. 303–4. [3] Ibid. iv. 7.

eight-syllabled metre. Especially noteworthy are a letter from Lul and others to an abbess Cuneburga and an anonymous letter to an abbess and a nun.

The Aldhelmian school, with the single exception of Eusebius (Hwaetberet), consists of men nurtured in the south and west of England. The two other great men who remain to be considered are representatives of the north. We have hinted already that the Latin culture of the northern English was more directly dependent upon Rome, than was that of Canterbury, with its eastern flavour, or that of the west, where Celtic influence may be suspected. We do not forget Aidan's work in the north; yet that had but faint effects upon literature; and the fact remains that the eccentricities and affectations of Aldhelm have no parallel in the work of Bede.

Bede is by far the greatest name which our period presents. Like the later Alcuin, he was of European reputation; but he owed that reputation to the sheer excellence of his books. Alcuin occupied a great and influential position, and used the opportunities which it gave him with the best effect. But he has left no writing which we value much for its own sake. Bede, on the other hand, made an indelible mark on the literature of succeeding centuries, and our debt to him can hardly be exaggerated.

Not many lives of great men have been less eventful. It seems probable that the longest journey he ever took was from Jarrow to York, and that the greatest crisis of his life was the pestilence in 686 which decimated the monks of Jarrow. He died in 735 at Jarrow, where, practically, his whole life of sixty-three years had been spent. The story of his last hours, as Cuthbert (afterwards abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow) tells it in his famous letter to Cuthwin, is of unapproached beauty in its kind. One of the latest utterances of the great scholar is an index to the tone and temper of the whole man.

"It is time," he said, "*if so it seem good to my Maker, that I should be set free from the flesh, and go to Him who, when I was not, fashioned me out of nothing. I have lived a long time, and my merciful Judge has ordained my life well for me. The time for me to be set free is at hand, for indeed my soul much desires to behold my King Christ in His beauty.*"

Over and over again has the life of Bede been sketched, and the long and varied list of his works reviewed and discussed. By none has this been better done than by Plummer, in connection with his admirable edition of the *History*. From this source we

examples of Pope's imagery heretofore discussed have revealed him in the position of an *amateur* familiar in some degree with the taste of his time and the theories on which it was based. The source of his comparisons was the finished picture and the response which pictures drew from the persons viewing them. In the passage just quoted from the preface to the *Iliad*, which was first published in 1715, the words 'laid on boldly, and executed with Rapidity' imply a different approach to painting as an art. Pope's concern was less with the amateur's response than with the creative act itself. Even before he took painting lessons from Charles Jervas he showed an artist's interest in the painter's medium and technique. He realized, for example, that a poem may lose its appeal if its language becomes obsolete, just as a painting loses its appeal when its colours become dim with age;[1] and he compares the chances for immortality of Lord Lansdowne, as a poet, with those, as a painter, of Verrio, the Italian commissioned by Charles and James to do murals at Windsor.[2]

Pope's knowledge of the creative processes of the graphic artist was undoubtedly heightened, during the summer of 1713, when he became, 'by Mr. Jervas's help, *elegans formarum spectator*. I begin to discover', he wrote to Gay, 23 August, 'beauties that were till now imperceptible to me. Every corner of an eye, the smallest degree of light or shade on a cheek, or in a dimple, have charms to distract me'.[3] Ten days later he informed Caryll that he was 'entirely immersed in the designing art' and had written nothing for some time. 'My eyes', he said, 'have so far got the better of my ears, that I have at present no notion of any harmony, besides that of colours.'[4] Pope was among the first to recognize the unlikelihood that his experiments with painting would ever produce a masterpiece. Without them, however, we might not have the lyrical pictorialism of *Eloisa to Abelard*. Neither should we have the illuminating use of painting technique which contributes so much, as we have seen, to the theme and the gallery-studio atmosphere in 'Of the Characters of

[1] *An Essay on Criticism*, ll. 484–93. A similar comparison occurs in the *Guardian*, no. 78.

[2] *Windsor Forest*, ll. 283–6, 303–10. An interesting account of Verrio's work, by Edgar Wind, appears in the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, iii. 127–37.

[3] *Works*, ed. Elwin–Courthope, vii. 410–11.

[4] Ibid. vi. 193.

formed the basis of recensions by Florus of Lyons, Rabanus of Mainz, Ado of Vienne, Notker of St Gall and Usuard. Next, the short work *De Temporibus*, written in 705. This consists of a few brief chapters on the divisions of time and the calculations connected with the observance of Easter, and ends with a very curt chronicle of the chief events in the six ages of the world's history. In 725, Bede expanded this little tract into a much larger book *De Temporum Ratione*, and the chronicle of the six ages of the world with which this concludes has been one of the most far-reaching in its influence of all his works. It served as a model, and as a source of information, to numberless subsequent chroniclers. "In chronology," says Plummer, "Bede has the enormous merit of being the first chronicler who gave the date from Christ's birth, in addition to the year of the world: and thus introduced the use of the Dionysian era into western Europe." One of the main topics of the book, the methods of calculating the date of Easter, is one which interested the men of his day far more than ourselves. A principal reason for this lies in the nearness and urgency of the controversies which long divided the Celtic, from the English, church on this subject. It was also one of the few which brought the mathematical side of men's intellects into play in the service of religion.

The *Ecclesiastical History of the English Race* is, as we know, Bede's greatest and best work. If a panegyric were likely to induce our readers to turn to it for themselves, that panegyric should be attempted here. Probably, however, a brief statement of the contents and sources of the five books will be more to the purpose. The first book, then, beginning with a description of Britain, carries the history from the invasion of Julius Caesar to the year 603, after the arrival of Augustine. Among the sources used are Pliny, Solinus, Orosius, Eutropius, Marcellinus Comes, Gildas, probably the *Historia Brittonum*, a *Passion of St Alban* and the *Life of St Germanus of Auxerre* by Constantius.

The second book begins with the death of Gregory the Great, and ends in 633, when Edwin of Northumbria was killed and Paulinus retired to Rochester.

It is in this book that the wonderful scene is described in which Edwin of Northumbria takes counsel with his nobles as to the acceptance or rejection of the Gospel as preached by Paulinus; and here occurs the unforgetable simile of the sparrow flying out of the winter night into the brightly-lighted hall, and out again into the dark.

This light and darkness in our chaos joined,
What shall divide? The god within the mind.
Extremes in nature equal ends produce,
In man they join to some mysterious use;
Though each by turns the other's bound invade,
As, in some well-wrought picture, light and shade,
And oft so mix, the diff'rence is too nice
Where ends the virtue, or begins the vice.
Fools! who from hence into the notion fall,
That vice or virtue there is none at all.
If white and black blend, soften, and unite
A thousand ways, is there no black or white?[1]

In describing as 'mysterious' the beneficent equilibrium between good and bad human impulses, Pope invites the reader to find the same quality in the artist's handling of light and shade. The image is closely related to the more general one near the end of the first epistle of the *Essay*, in which mysterious nature is equated with 'art, unknown to thee', the art, that is, of God.

Such imagery as this, it is hardly necessary to remark, goes well beyond the purely conventional. Although, throughout his works, Pope shows that he was thoroughly acquainted with the well-known parallel between the sister arts, his experience with the brush enabled him to draw upon the craft as well as the art of painting. That in so doing he produced such varied and subtle effects can be explained only by his own artistic sensibility.

[1] ii. 203–14.

other (at Cambridge) in some such continental English colony as Epternach.

The two lives of St Cuthbert and the lives of the abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow must not be forgotten. The last-named, based to some extent upon an anonymous earlier work, has very great beauty and interest; not many pictures of monastic life are so sane, so human and, at the same time, so productive of reverence and affection in the reader.

The two lives of St Cuthbert are less important in all ways. The metrical one is the most considerable piece of verse attempted by Bede; that in prose is a not very satisfactory expansion of an earlier life by a Lindisfarne monk.

Enough has probably been said to give a general idea of the character of Bede's studies and acquirements. Nothing could be gained by transcribing the lists of authors known to him, which are accessible in the works of Plummer and of Manitius. There is nothing to make us think that he had access to classical or Christian authors of importance not known to us. He quotes many Christian poets, but not quite so many as Aldhelm, and, clearly, does not take so much interest as his predecessor in pagan authors.

The letter to Egbert of York, perhaps the latest document we possess from Bede's pen, deserves a special and separate mention. It is, in brief, a pastoral epistle; and it gives (what we could only gather indirectly from his other works) the clearest evidence of Bede's lively interest in the religious life of the people at large, and his wise and noble conception of the duties of a Christian minister. His advice to Egbert is prompted by "a real and unassuming spirit of humility and affection," and it is thoroughly practical in its statement, alike of the abuses which need reform, and of the means of reforming them. The suggestions offered by Bede are those of a man at once spiritually minded and versed in the affairs of his time; they are, moreover, based on an intimate knowledge of the history of the church with which he is dealing. Rarely as he may have trodden the regions outside the walls of his monastery, it is plain from this letter alone that Bede may be reckoned as one of the most effective contributors, by his advice and influence, to the spreading of Christianity in northern England.

No enumeration of works, no accumulation of epithets will give the picture of a man's mind. And it is the personality of Bede which we come to regard with affection, when we have read the

Oh hide the God still more! and make us see
Such as Lucretius drew, a God like Thee:
Wrapt up in Self, a God without a Thought,
Regardless of our merit or default.
Or that bright Image to our fancy draw,
Which Theocles in raptur'd vision saw,
While thro' Poetic scenes the Genius roves,
Or wanders wild in Academic Groves;
That NATURE our Society adores,
Where Tindal dictates, and Silenus snores.'

Throughout the passage Pope is obviously aiming at various kinds of unorthodox thought, and some of the errors belong to philosophers of an earlier age: Hobbes, Descartes, and Spinoza are named in the Pope–Warburton notes. In a few places, however, there can be little doubt that he had in mind the deists of his own day; this is evident not only from the men mentioned or specifically referred to—Shaftesbury, Tindal, and Thomas Gordon—but also from the deistic positions that are attacked. On lines 485–6 Professor Sutherland has the following note: 'Pope here seems to be at some pains to undo what some of his critics thought he had done in the *Essay on Man*, and to dissociate himself clearly from Deism.'[1] In other lines the dissociation is even clearer.

The plainest of the attacks on the deistic position comes at the beginning of the passage, where it is said of the 'gloomy Clerk' that he is a 'Sworn foe to Myst'ry' and that he 'damns implicit faith', for in relation to the Christian mysteries and 'implicit faith' the frequently vague distinction between deists and 'philosophizing divines' is perfectly sharp.[2] Since at least the time of Toland's *Christianity not Mysterious* (1696) the deists had clearly—if not always quite openly—rejected the revealed mysteries such as the doctrine of the Trinity. Such mysteries by definition could not be discovered or understood by reason, and what could not be understood by reason, so the deists said, could not be believed. The orthodox, however, insisted that

[1] *The Dunciad*, ed. James Sutherland ('The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope', vol. v, 1943), p. 389. Quotations from the poem are from this edition.

[2] On this topic see Louis A. Landa, 'Swift, the Mysteries, and Deism', *Studies in English, Department of English, The University of Texas, 1944* (Austin, 1945), pp. 239–56. Since Professor Landa gives such complete documentation for both the orthodox and the deistic positions, I have quoted from only a single text to show that the deists' arguments remained unchanged in 1730.

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waged with Felix of Urgel and Elipandus of Toledo upon the question whether Christ, in His human nature, was or was not to be called the "adoptive" Son of God. The liturgical works, again—the homiliary, lectionary and sacramentary—which made a deep mark upon the church-life of the continent, are works of compilation. As to the revision of the text of the Latin Bible, clear evidence that it was the work of Alcuin is not yet producible; but the probability is very strong that he was at least prominent, if not supreme, in the undertaking.

But, though the tale of Alcuin's labours is an imposing one, it is the intellectual stimulus which he imparted, and the long line of scholars which owed to him its existence, that forms his true monument. He ranks with Bede as an inspirer of men; but the vehicle by which his inspiration was conveyed was rather the voice of the teacher than the written words.

With Alcuin we close the list of the considerable authors who fall within our period. But there still remain some few writings of the eighth and ninth centuries which demand a word of notice. These consist mainly of lives of saints, visions, poems and devotional literature.

The anonymous lives of the abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow, and the life of Cuthbert by a Lindisfarne monk—both extensively used by Bede—have been mentioned already. The earliest life of Gregory the Great, to which an English origin is attributed, should not be forgotten here. It is discussed by Plummer in an appendix to the edition of Bede's *History*.

More important than this, from the literary point of view, are the lives of Wilfrid of York by Eddius Stephanus, and of Guthlac by Felix. Both of these belong to the eighth century. The former begins in a way which may indicate either indolence or modesty on the part of its author, who transcribes, with few alterations and without acknowledgment, the preface of the anonymous life of Cuthbert. The reading of the life will probably conduce to the most favourable interpretation being placed upon this proceeding; for, unflinching partisan as he is, Eddius makes us think of him kindly. Many a man would have spoken much more bitterly of the opponents of his hero; and, though Eddius persistently and gallantly disguises that hero's faults, we do not feel so much that he is a bad historian, as that he is a wrongly faithful friend.

Felix, the biographer of Guthlac, is far more picturesque in style than Eddius. Unlike the latter, he has fallen under the

God are inferred from 'plain Experience'; (2) 'the high Priori Road', where the reasoning is 'downward' from supposedly self-evident first principles. The first of these methods—obviously the one favoured by Pope—was not, contrary to what students of the period have sometimes suggested, the characteristic method of the deists. It was rather such staunch Christians as Boyle, Ray, Bentley, Derham, and the other 'physico-theological' writers of the Boyle Lectures who searched for final causes in all the discoveries of the new science and pursued the argument from design through all the works of creation.

The characteristic method of the deists, on the other hand—though in this they did not differ from some of the 'philosophizing divines'—was to deduce the being and attributes of God *a priori* from 'the nature and reason of things' and then from God's attributes to deduce man's religious and moral duties. Thus when the deist Thomas Chubb attempts to show 'the *several kinds of evidence*, upon which the truth of God's moral character may be suppos'd to depend', he finds that they may be 'rang'd under these three heads *viz. first*, divine testimony, *secondly*, experience and observation; and, *thirdly*, the nature and reason of things'. Divine testimony, Chubb finds, is entirely unsatisfactory, because it must assume God's truthfulness in order to establish His other moral attributes. The proof from 'experience and observation' is somewhat better, for 'the late discoveries that have been made in *astronomy*, *anatomy*, and all the parts of *natural philosophy*' display 'the marks of *wisdom*, and *goodness*, that run thro the whole'. But this proof is not conclusive:

> . . . tho the repeated instances of God's performing actions, that are productive of much good, . . . are a *strong presumption*, and make it *highly probable*, that such a moral property takes place in him; yet these alone do not amount to an *absolute proof*, that it certainly is so; because the action, tho ever so often repeated, is not sufficient to discover the *motive* it proceeded from.

God may be acting, Chubb says, 'from arbitrary pleasure, or from vain-glory, that he may have the empty praise of his creatures'. But the third method, the argument *a priori*, is completely satisfactory, and Chubb is able to conclude that 'the *nature of things* evidently, and certainly, proves God to be a *wise*, and *good Being*; who prudently exercises his natural properties, to serve the purposes of *benevolence*, and that he

by this class of literature upon the intellectual, as well as the religious, surroundings of the clergy and monks of the eighth and ninth centuries.

A not inconsiderable portion of the Latin writings of these same centuries consists of documents connected with church law. Books called *Penitentials* exist under the names of Theodore, Bede and Egbert of York; and there are, besides, canons of church councils and the like. But these have really no claim to the name of literature, and a mere mention of them must suffice.

These, then, are the chief remains of the Latin literature which was produced in England before the time of Alfred. The period of greatest activity lasted, we have seen, for about a hundred years, from A.D. 690 to 790. It is marked by the rise of two great schools, those of Canterbury and York, and by the work of one great scholar. The south of England produced works characterised by a rather perverted and fanciful erudition. It was the north which gave birth to Bede, the one writer of that age whose works are of first-rate value, and to Alcuin, whose influence was supreme in the schools of the continent.

Note to p. 78. Henry Bradley has pointed out (*English Historical Review*, 1900, p. 291) that the first poem is, most likely, addressed to Helmgisl, not Aldhelm, and that the fifth is by Aethilwald and addressed to one Oua.

man, as to matters of religion, rests *wholly* upon fact and experience; and that therefore all speculative reasonings upon it, are to be looked upon as idle, and visionary, as a sick man's dream about health; and as wholly to be rejected, as any speculative arguments that should pretend to prove, in spite of all facts and experience, the *immortality*, and *unalterable* state of human bodies.[1]

John Conybeare is even clearer in distinguishing his method from that of his deistic opponent: 'I conceive, it is much safer and more reasonable to argue from known Fact to What is really fit and right for God to do, than to endeavour the Overthrow of What is certain Fact, by uncertain Presumptions what the Divine Attributes require.'[2] And Bishop Butler, finally, in his famous *Analogy* delivers what is probably the most telling blow against the *a priori* method of the deists:

Forming our notions of the constitution and government of the world upon reasoning, without foundation for the principles which we assume, whether from the attributes of God, or any thing else, is building a world upon hypothesis, like Des Cartes. Forming our notions upon reasoning from principles which are certain, but applied to cases to which we have no ground to apply them, . . . is an error much akin to the former: since what is assumed in order to make the reasoning applicable, is Hypothesis.[3]

While critics of Tindal thus attacked the kind of natural religion 'founded on the reason & nature of things',[4] none of them took occasion to object to the other religious argument, from the creation as effect to God as cause. On the contrary, some of them considered the argument from design particularly appropriate because it offered clear evidence concerning God's being and attributes and at the same time presented the same kind of difficulty that Tindal had found with revelation. 'Though the *creation* plainly declares the glory, and wisdom, and goodness of God', Law says, 'yet it has more mysteries in it, more things, whose fitness, expedience, and reasonableness, human reason cannot comprehend, than are to be found in

[1] *The Case of Reason, or Natural Religion, Fairly and Fully Stated* (1731), in *The Works of the Reverend William Law* (Brockenhurst, 1892), ii. 124; see also pp. 117–23.

[2] p. 107. See also [Duncan Forbes,] *Some Thoughts concerning Religion, Natural and Revealed* (London, 1735), p. 51.

[3] *The Analogy of Religion Natural and Revealed to the Constitution and Course of Nature* (1736), Introduction, par. 7, in *The Works of Bishop Butler* (London, 1900), ii. 5, and cf. pp. 8, 267.

[4] Tindal, p. 11.

still powerful in the days of Charles the Bald. The illuminated MSS of the French court of the ninth century—the St Denis and Metz Bibles, the Psalter and book of Gospels, in particular—are conspicuous examples of artistic skill. After his accession Alfred looked to the Frankish empire for assistance in his task of reviving learning in Wessex. At his request, Grimbald, a monk of St Bertin in Flanders, and John of Corbie came over to Britain, and were appointed abbots of Winchester and Aethelney respectively. The king diligently promoted scholarship, and himself undertook to translate into West Saxon recognised works in Latin prose. At the same time he increased the number of monasteries and reformed the educational side of these institutions by the introduction of teachers, English and foreign. The story of Grimbald's visit to Oxford and of the existence there of a community of scholars is, however, not supported by any evidence. *The legend was interpolated in an edition of Asser's Life of Alfred*, based on Parker's text, which Camden published in 1602—3. No MS, or other authority, is known to support Camden's statement. The consequence of the educational and literary activity of Alfred's reign was to transfer the centre of learning from Northumbria to Wessex. The monastic communities of Lindisfarne, Evesham and Croyland had fostered scholarship in the north, and, in the seventh century, Whitby had produced Caedmon. In 674, Benedict Biscop had built the monastery of St Peter at Wearmouth and, in 682, a second house at Jarrow, at both of which large libraries were collected. The arts of glass-making, gold-work and embroidery were introduced from the continent. Northumbria had thus become "the literary centre of western Europe," producing scholars of the type of Bede, the master of the learning of his day, and Alcuin, the scholarly helper of Charles the Great. But with the appearance of the Danes began the decline of learning in the north. So much did scholarship suffer in consequence of the viking raids that, at the date of Alfred's accession, there was no scholar even south of the Thames who could read the mass-book in Latin. The revival of letters in Wessex was the direct result of the king's enthusiasm and personal efforts, and his educational aims recall irresistibly the work of Charles the Great.

The authorities for the life of Alfred are many, but of unequal value. His own works, reflecting as they do his personal character and convictions, furnish the most important data, the *Chronicle* and the *Life* by Asser ranking next in value. Asser, a Welsh cleric, was, in all probability, educated at St David's

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character of the prefaces to the various books. The chroniclers are of little assistance in the determination of the relative order.

The *Handbook* may safely be considered the earliest of Alfred's compilations. Unfortunately, no trace of the book is now to be found, though its existence is attested by external evidence. The circumstances under which the formation of the *Handbook* was begun make it clear that it was essentially a commonplace-book of extracts from the Latin Bible and the Fathers. Asser, to whom was due the suggestion that a book of this nature might be of service to the king, describes it as an assemblage of *flosculi*, culled from various sources. These extracts Alfred wrote down in Latin, in the first instance, and, afterwards, began to render them into English. The first entries were made on 11 November 887, *in venerabili Martini solemnitate*. William of Malmesbury[1] refers to the common-place book, *quem patria lingua Handboc (Encheiridion) i.e. manualem librum appellavit.* Further, there is in Florence of Worcester's *Chronicle* a reference to certain *Dicta regis Aelfredi*, whereby the *Handbook* may, possibly, be meant. There would, however, be no justification for identifying the *Dicta* with the *Handbook*, were it not for the fact that Malmesbury uses the latter as an authority for the life of Aldhelm. It is quite conceivable that Alfred inserted among his notes an account of Aldhelm, with whose verses he was probably acquainted. But no importance whatever is to be attached to Florence of Worcester's suggestion that the *Handbook* was a record of West Saxon genealogy. It is possible that neither chronicler is to be relied upon in this matter. The formation of the *Handbook* was of literary importance merely: it afforded Alfred valuable literary training and indirectly stimulated him to try his hand at more extensive translation.

The translation of Gregory's *Cura Pastoralis* may be considered the first of Alfred's literary works, properly so called. Grein, Pauli and Bosworth awarded first place to *Boethius*, but internal evidence is altogether in favour of the priority of the *Pastoral Care*. The decay of learning consequent upon Danish raids made it imperative that an attempt should be made to revive the education of the clergy. No work of the Middle Ages seemed better adapted to enlighten the church than Gregory's treatise, designed to serve as a spiritual guide for the conscience of the priest. In *Moralia*

[1] *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, II, § 123.

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ingenious suggestion that the translation was dictated. A close comparison of the Latin text and the West Saxon version throws further light on the king's methods. His English audience is always kept in view, and, for their benefit, he inserts brief explanatory notes. Thus, he interprets "manna" as "the sweet meat which came down from heaven," "shittim wood" as "the tree which never decays," "purple" as "the royal robe." Occasionally, he Teutonises the terms of the Latin original by identifying Hebrew institutions and social grades with their nearest analogues in West Saxon civilisation. *Plateis* he renders by "herestractum," David is described as a "salm-sceop," Uriah as a "thegn." Naturally, blunders are to be met with, as, for example, in the derivation of *sacerdotes*—"in English cleansers because they are to act as guides of believers and govern them." Compared with later translations, Alfred's *Pastoral Care* is very close to the original. The style is somewhat Latinised and abounds in pleonasms and repetition, and the translation is remarkable for the number of ἅπαξ λεγόμενα it contains. The copy preserved in the Bodleian is interesting as containing the name of Werferth, and it is the actual copy destined for the Worcester see.

The relative positions of *Orosius* and *Bede* are difficult to determine. For a long period the prior position was assigned to *Orosius*, but, latterly, there has been a tendency to reverse the order. The argument based on closeness of translation may, in this case, be fallacious, not only from the fact that the Latin of Orosius presents more difficulties than that of Bede, but because, in the latter case, Alfred would have been far less justified in tampering with his original. Bede's work ranked, in Alfred's day, as a standard history of the early English church; it was a recognised classic. Much of Orosius, on the other hand, was obviously unsuitable for English readers unversed in the outlines of classical history. The comparative closeness of the translation of Bede does not, therefore, necessarily imply early work. Plummer has pointed out that the account of Caesar's invasions was omitted in the first recension of *Bede*—a fact which can only be understood by assuming that Alfred had already treated these events in detail in *Orosius*.

The *Historia adversus Paganos* of Paulus Orosius, a Spanish ecclesiastic, dates from the fifth century and was looked upon as a standard text-book of universal history. Orosius, as a friend of Augustine, had already given expression to anti-Pelagian views in an earlier work. His later book, likewise due to the instigation

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good literature, and finds an honourable place in Hakluyt's great collection of voyages.

Alfred was too wise to burden his book with all the geographical detail given by Orosius. He confined himself to the essentials of general geography, omitting the descriptions of north-east Africa and of central Asia and abbreviating other passages. The mistakes which crept into his version are to be ascribed either to lack of acquaintance with the district described or to a misunderstanding of the somewhat difficult Latin of Orosius. The historical portion of the book is less original than the geographical. Alfred omitted a great deal, particularly in the sections dealing with classical mythology. The stories of Philomela, Tantalus and Caligula had little to commend them, and were not inserted in the translation. Many of the moralisings of Orosius were left out, though a number were retained in a paraphrased form. Curiously enough, some of the passages definitely ascribed by Alfred to Orosius are not to be traced in the original. It is possible that, in such cases, Alfred availed himself of materials as yet unknown to us. A more questionable proceeding is the omission of details prejudicial to the reputation of Germanic tribes. The alterations and additions in the historical section are decidedly interesting. There are the usual misunderstandings—the identification of Theseus with the victor of Marathon, of Carthage with Cordova, and the fusion of the consuls Lepidus and Mucius into one under the title of Lepidus Mutius. Wherever possible the king acts as interpreter, substituting, for example, English equivalents for the Latin names of British towns and English names of measures for Latin. The description given by Orosius of the appearances of Commodus in the arena is reduced to the simple statement that the emperor was accustomed to fight duels. Alfred's imagination plays around the details of the plague of frogs in Egypt—"No meat could be prepared without there being as large a quantity of reptiles as of meat in the vessel before it could be dressed." Cleopatra is described as placing the adder against her arm because she thought it would cause less pain there. Interesting accounts are inserted of a Roman triumph and of the temple of Janus. A side glimpse is often to be had of the king's opinions, religious or otherwise. He enlarges on Scipio's love for the fatherland, concluding: "he compelled them to swear that they would all together either live or die in their native land." His admiration, likewise, is moved by the courage of Regulus, to whom he devotes consider- space. Thus, *Orosius* is of great value for the light it thro

and, perhaps, inevitable one. In his works Lord Verulam had expressed the idea of science much more comprehensively; some of its constituent elements were primarily due to him. But even more important, his ardent reforming spirit qualified him for leadership, and his eloquence made his leadership effective. In the many references to him during the second half of the century we easily detect the warmth of personal feeling such as the leader of any movement should and does inspire, a feeling of human discipleship.

All the principles which I have represented as constituting the idea of science find varied and eloquent expression in Bacon's works. To these we should add another conception, one peculiarly Bacon's, which, though of no significance to-day, was one of the most important factors, if not the most important, in the development of science at this time. Sir Francis believed that all the phenomena in the universe were the result of the operation of the primary laws of nature, alone and combined. He did not think that these laws were many in number, but just as out of a relatively small number of letters innumerable words may be formed, so any number of phenomena could spring from various combinations of the laws. If man could discover these primary laws, then by combining them he could produce all natural phenomena and be indeed master of nature. But to discover them, Bacon held that it was first necessary to compile a natural history which would include all the data that the earth and the fullness thereof could contribute. The absurdity of such an undertaking is quite apparent to us now, but so eloquently had he impressed upon his followers the need, and possibility, of such a history, that they accepted it with a faith which stifled all misgivings, and which made them eager to undertake an enterprise, the completion of which they could not hope to see. For Bacon had stated that the undertaking could be achieved only by the co-operative endeavours of large numbers of men extended over several ages. So scientists came together to form groups of experimenters, some of which merged to form the Royal Society. The desire to contribute to the natural history intensified their efforts and was largely responsible for the rapid spread of observing and experimenting so characteristic of this period. Again and again we find men declaring that the motive of their scientific activities is a desire to furnish data for the history. The avowed purpose of the

good literature, and finds an honourable place in Hakluyt's great collection of voyages.

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encomiasticks, in praise of the archbishop, the theatre, the vice-chancellor, the architect, and the painter: the last of execrations against fanaticks, conventicles, comprehension, and new philosophy; damning them *ad inferos, ad gehennam.*[1]

Though unfortunately the oration has not survived, Wallis's words make it plain that Puritanism and science were in conjunction the object of South's wrath.

There was one manifestation of the Puritans' interest in science which did more than anything else to prejudice the Restoration against it. During the period when they were in power there appeared a series of educational treatises by John Dury, John Hall, William Petty, Noah Biggs, John Webster, and others, addressed to Parliament and advocating revolutionary reforms in English universities.[2] Inspired by Bacon, though sometimes indirectly through Comenius, these advocate the most thoroughgoing changes ever proposed for the universities in the same length of time. The writers in most determined fashion urge Parliament to abolish nearly all the subjects taught there and to substitute for them the new science, both the great discoveries that had been published and also the principles embodied in the scientific movement. Even more earnestly they advocate the introduction of all kinds of technological and vocational subjects. They entertained fond hopes that great progress in this direction could be made through Baconian experimentation. They would abolish the study of syllogistic logic, ethics, metaphysics, and religion. They viewed the study of languages only as the preparation of tools whereby the knowledge contained in them might be secured. They dismissed linguistic study pursued for its own sake or for literary purposes as a vain and useless enjoyment. The disputations, declamations, and public lectures, comprising the old methods of training and instruction, were likewise reprehended. Generally speaking, in place of the traditional curriculum they advocated only useful and profitable subjects, to use their own words. First and foremost the students were to be taught the experimental philosophy of Bacon, described by one reformer as

[1] See a letter by John Wallis dated 17 July 1669 in Robert Boyle's *Works*, ed. Birch, v. 514.

[2] See Richard F. Jones, *Ancients and Moderns*, chap. v. A few passages from this volume are incorporated in the present article.

in an altogether un-English fashion, and words are used in an un-English sense as equivalents for Latin terms. A peculiarity of the style is the employment of two English terms to represent a single term in the original. On the whole, the translation cannot rank very high among Alfred's works, even if it be rightly attributed to him.

There is no external evidence to enable us to decide the date of Alfred's code of laws. The historical introduction, based on the *Vulgate*, shows considerable independence and cannot be dated very early. The composition of the code may be assigned, provisionally, to the close of Alfred's first translation period (c. 893), without, however, attaching much importance to Malmesbury's statement that it was undertaken "amid the clash of arms[1]." The code is of a somewhat composite character, and has usually been arranged in three sections—the introduction, the laws of Alfred proper and the laws of Ine. In his monograph entitled *The Legal Code of Alfred the Great*, Turk points out that this arrangement is not justified by the MSS. The introduction consists properly of two parts—the historical introduction based on the Mosaic law and the introduction proper. The insertions from the Mosaic law give a universal character to Alfred's code. They are rendered somewhat freely, large portions of the Latin text being omitted and other portions altered. One of the Mosaic laws ran as follows: "If a man shall deliver unto his neighbour money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, he shall pay double. If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall come near unto God (or the judges), to see whether he have not put his hand unto his neighbour's goods[2]." This passage Alfred renders as follows: "If anyone entrust his property to his friend: if he shall steal it, let him pay double; if he know not who has stolen it, let him excuse himself." Another Mosaic law—"If men contend, and one smiteth the other with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keep his bed: if he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit; only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed[3]"—has been much altered in Alfred's version: "If a man strike his neighbour with a stone or with his fist and he may nevertheless go about with a staff, let him provide him a leech and do his work during the time that he is not able." The law concerning the firstborn—"the firstborn of thy sons shalt

[1] *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, I, § 122.
[2] *Ex.* XXII, 7, 8.
[3] *Ex.* XXI, 18, 19.

But even greater emphasis was placed upon utilitarian or applied science than upon pure. Only practical mathematics was to be taught, for as one worthy says mathematics exists only to enable men to build houses and to assist mechanical operations. Another says that physics is to be studied not so much to secure knowledge of nature as to use this knowledge 'for the general good and benefit of mankind'. Medicine, agriculture, horticulture, surveying, and kindred subjects are given a prominent place in the curriculum. Mechanical knowledge is emphasized. In fact one reformer insists that every mechanical art, no matter how humble, should have its professor or lecturer. All these treatises reveal a spirit quite familiar to our academic world to-day, a spirit which insists upon the practical and useful in education, which emphasizes scientific rather than humanistic subjects, and which would load the curricula of our colleges of liberal arts with professional and vocational courses. The modern reader, perusing them for the first time, finds them strangely familiar.

What social sciences were taught at the universities fared better than humanistic studies. History was to remain. In political science, however, Aristotle was no longer to be studied, but in his place Machiavelli and, to quote one writer, 'our own Countreyman master *Hobbs* [who] hath pieces of more exquisiteness, and profundity in that subject than ever the Grecian wit was able to reach unto'.[1] These are indeed queer birds to be recommended by the 'godly men', as they liked to be called. But Hobbes the Atheist had joyfully joined forces with the Puritans in the assault on the universities, and they loved him for it. It is worthy of notice that the most serious attempt ever made in the past to drive humanistic studies from the curriculum to provide space for scientific and technological subjects was made in hearty co-operation with a complete apostle of totalitarianism and with the encouragement of an undisguised dictator.

When the scientific movement emerged from this era, it bore on its face such an indubitable expression of scientific utilitarianism and Puritan Philistinism that authentic scientists themselves became duly alarmed. It is rather amusing to witness the alacrity with which the Royal Society, through its historian Thomas Sprat, sought to assure the world that its

[1] John Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

If a man burn a tree in a wood and it is made clear who did it, let him pay the full penalty of 60s., because fire is a thief. If a man fell many trees in a wood and it is found out, let him pay for three trees, each with 30s. He need not pay for more, however many they be, because the axe is an informer and not a thief.

It is possible that some years elapsed before Alfred began his translation of Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae*. Assuming that his energies had been fully employed during the period from 888 to 893 with his early work, he could have had little leisure for any new undertaking before the year 897. The freedom with which the whole of this new task is carried out points to a late period and a mature method. Boethius's book ranked among the most characteristic products of the Middle Ages. Its influence on later literature was immense, and is scarcely to be estimated by the number of translations, numerous though they were. It was done into English, after Alfred's time, by Chaucer and Elizabeth, into German by Notker, into French by Jean de Meun. An early metrical version in Provençal also exists. The influence of Boethius has been traced in *Beowulf*; it permeates Dante and Chaucer. The closing words of the *Paradiso*—"Already my desire and will were rolled, even as a wheel that moveth equally, by the love that moves the sun and the other stars"—owe their origin to the *Consolation of Philosophy*. The book was written while the author was under sentence of death after having fallen into disfavour with the Ostrogothic king Theodric. It is in the form of a dialogue between Boethius and Philosophy, wherein are set forth the consolations associated with the contemplative state of mind. The famous dissertation upon fate and providence is conducted with considerable subtlety; but the atmosphere of the book is religious rather than philosophical, and it is signally free from the technicalities of the schools. Boethius harks back to the early Greek standpoint of Plato, from whom he derives his central doctrine of submissiveness. The finite is to be realised only in the absolute, which is identical with love, and love is realised by faith. The Middle Ages, with their vivid sense of an overruling fate, found in Boethius an interpretation of life closely akin to the spirit of Christianity. The *Consolation of Philosophy* stands, by its note of fatalism and its affinities with the Christian doctrine of humility, midway between the heathen philosophy of Seneca and the later Christian philosophy of consolation represented by Thomas à Kempis. Alfred's religious outlook had much in common with the gentle philosophy of "the last of the Romans," and the translation afforded him considerable opportunity for

earned Meric Casaubon, prebendary of Canterbury, was everely critical of the materialistic standards by which science would measure utility. If, he says, usefulness were found only n what affords the necessities of life, brewers and bakers, smiths and veterinarians would have to be looked upon as equal or superior to those who have been considered the great ights of learning. Henry Stubbe, a well-known doctor of the day, who waged unrelenting warfare against the Royal Society, scornfully contrasts such vocational subjects as the making of cider, the planting of orchards, the grinding of optic glasses to the logic and moral philosophy taught in the universities. 'What *contempt*', he exclaims, 'is there raised upon the . . . *Ethics* of *Aristotle*, and the *Stoiques*? And these Moral instructions that have produced . . . the *Pompeys* and *Ciceroes*, are now slighted in comparison of day-laboring', and he continues to attack the substitution of the study of mechanical trades, such as the making of wine and the art of dyeing, for the philosophy taught in the schools.[1] Other critics, like Thomas Hall, maintain the same attitude. The resentment against the Royal Society because of the previous attacks of scientific Puritans upon the universities was strong. Peter Gunning, bishop of Chichester, preached regularly against the scientists, and objected to the publication of a volume of verses, simply because it contained a poem in praise of the Society. Though the Society, warned by the strong reaction against the Puritans, honestly disclaimed any intention of meddling with the schools, the values which the members continued to hold were exactly those which would militate against liberal education. The fight was really one between humanism and naturalistic materialism.

But humanistic critics of experimental science began to discover another danger in the emphasis placed upon sense-observation and in the absorbing study of external nature. They began to fear that the world of man would be sunk in the world of nature, that man would seek in nature the laws that govern his being, and would forget the distinction which Emerson was later to make between the law of the thing and the law of man. They had reason to fear. In the history of the Royal Society, which though written by Sprat was an official pronouncement of the whole organization, some remarkable

[1] Henry Stubbe, *Legends no Histories* (1670), preface.

of all goodness "like waters from the sea." God is likened to a steersman who perceives the oncoming of a storm and makes preparations against it. In an important article, Schepss raised the question as to how far Alfred's interpolations were based on Latin commentaries similar to that of Froumond, or upon scholia such as are to be found in the Munich MS. He pointed out that, in expanding Boethius's account of the giants, who incurred the wrath of Jupiter by assailing heaven, Alfred introduced Nimrod and the tower of Babel. The hint for this seems to have been derived from the Munich MS. The famous simile of the egg—

Thou, glorious king of hosts, through strong might wonderfully didst establish the earth so firmly that she inclineth not on any side nor may she sink hither and thither any more than she ever did. Yet nothing earthly sustains her, it is equally easy for this world to fall upwards or downwards likest to that which happens in an egg, the yolk is in the midst yet glideth freely about the egg. So stands the world fixed in its place, while the streams, the play of waters, the sky and the stars and the shining shell move about day by day as they did long ago—

and the other simile, of the wheel, in which God is compared to the fixed axle round which the felly and spokes turn, are not wholly original but, together with many other passages, show the influence of the scholia. It is highly probable that much in Alfred's work which has hitherto been looked upon as wholly original will be found to have been based upon similar sources. The preface, on the genuineness of which some doubt has been thrown, informs us that Alfred was the translator of the book and that he rendered his original "sometimes word for word, sometimes sense for sense, as best he could amid the manifold occupations of his kingdom." This description of the king's method is altogether in keeping with that prefixed to the *Pastoral Care*. It is worthy of note that, according to William of Malmesbury[1], Asser had previously glossed the Latin for the king's benefit. In view of this statement the present translation was, for a long time, considered to have been the first of Alfred's undertakings. He may have intended to begin *Boethius* at an early period, but it is certain that the translation as we now have it is a late piece of work. The language has given rise to interesting problems. The two chief MSS, the Bodleian and the Cottonian, contain, according to Sievers, a large number of Kentisms. These are possibly due to a scribe of Kentish origin, the whole case being parallel to that of *Bede*.

Much discussion has arisen with regard to the authorship of the alliterative metres which are to be found in the British

[1] *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, II, § 122.

the Channel, where Descartes had developed his mechanistic scheme of things. This mechanical philosophy, as it was called, laid out a pattern for explaining all natural phenomena on the basis of matter, motion, and mathematics, thus at one blow sweeping aside all the specious theories of traditional philosophies. Descartes saw in nature one vast machine filled with innumerable smaller ones. Animals were mere automata, and so were the bodies of men. Light, life, and beauty left nature. But he was pious and sincerely believed in God and men's spirit. He did not try to mechanize the rational soul of man, but postulated for its base a thinking substance, different from the substance of matter; in other words, an immaterial substance. In England the experimental scientists were carrying out Bacon's injunction to observe and experiment, but being human they could not altogether observe his caution against using reason in seeking explanations of the data secured by their scientific activities. More and more they discovered that the mechanical philosophy furnished clearer and more convincing explanations of these data than any which they had inherited or devised. The frequent expressions of this discovery brought it about that the scientific movement became closely associated with Descartes's philosophy, an association which at first promised to be a great asset but which later caused the Baconians many a headache.

All might have gone well had it not been for a certain gentleman whom we have already noticed as a companion of the Puritan brethren. Descartes had saved man's soul and made God's support necessary for the running of the machine. Thomas Hobbes, whose hard-headed philosophy was as rigid as cast iron and as hard as adamant, heartily subscribed to matter, motion, and mathematics, but his dogmatic, unfeeling, and materialistic soul, a soul he would have denied, took from man that spiritual comfort which Descartes's dualism had furnished him in compensation for what the French philosopher had done to nature. By ignoring Descartes's assertion that God's support was necessary to the functioning of the machine, and by means of his famous dictum that there is no such thing as an immaterial substance, Hobbes took God from his heavens and the soul from man. So man's mind as well as his body becomes mechanistic, and mental as well as physical phenomena are explained by the formula of matter and motion,

has much in common with that of Alfred's *Boethius*, and there are close resemblances between the two works in thought and style. Some of the original passages seem to have been directly based upon translated portions of Boethius, and original passages in both works sometimes correspond closely. Alfred was attracted to Augustine by the nature of his theme. The Latin work is a treatise on God and the soul, in which much space is devoted to a discussion of immortality. The translation is undertaken quite in accordance with Alfred's customary methods. He renders the first book somewhat closely, but paraphrases the sense and makes a few additions, indulging his taste for simile in a comparison between the soul at rest in God and a ship at anchor, and discoursing at length on the changes that take place in nature, on the likeness between God and the sun and on the relation between king and subject. Book II he renders very freely. He discusses the problem of immortality from an independent standpoint, "believe thine own reason and believe Christ, the Son of God, and believe all His saints for they were truthful witnesses, and believe thine own soul which ever declares through reason that she is in thee." Book III is based on another source, Augustine's *De Videndo Deo*, supplemented by passages from Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, Gregory's *Morals* and *Dialogues* and Jerome's *Commentary on Luke*. The dialogue form is continued for some time, though the sources do not justify such an arrangement. The spirit of the whole translation is deeply religious. It is a logical discussion of the nature and future of the soul, in which Augustine's dialectics are rejected in favour of common-sense reasoning. There is a natural connection between the *Soliloquies* and Boethius, since its central theme had already been suggested in the closing pages of the latter. It has already been shown that the preface to the *Pastoral Care* is in the nature of a general introduction to Alfred's translated works; the preface to the *Soliloquies* may be considered an epilogue—the king's farewell to literature—

I gathered me poles and props and bars and handles for each of the tools which I could handle, and bough-timbers and bolt-timbers for each of the tasks which I was capable of undertaking, the fairest wood, as far as I could bear it away. I came not home with a great burden, since it pleased me not to bring all the wood home, even if I could have carried it. On each tree I saw something which I needed at home. Therefore, I advise every man who is able and has many waggons, that he direct himself to the same wood where I cut the props, and that he procure for himself more, and load his waggons

science from the imputation of atheism by gathering all the data he could to support belief in ghosts and witches. No member of the American Society for Psychical Research ever collected occult data with more assiduity than Glanvill sought out witch- and ghost-stories, which he published in 1668 in a book the sub-title of which is 'A full and plain Evidence Concerning Witches and Apparitions'. The great Robert Boyle expressed an emphatic belief in the usefulness of Glanvill's investigation, only cautioning him to use well-authenticated stories. It is quite possible that the desire to refute Hobbes strengthened and prolonged belief in witches. It is indeed strange to find science seeking refuge in ghosts.

There was, however, a more important, and certainly a more rational, way out of the dilemma in which the Baconians found themselves, a dilemma which, as I have said, arose from the fact that the philosophy which they found most useful in explaining experiments had in the eyes of many turned out to be atheistic. The experimentalists could draw, and insist upon, a clear line of distinction between the mechanical philosophy, which was a theory, and the experimental, which rested on sense-observation only. This they did. As we have already seen, Bacon insisted upon the need of extensive and prolonged observation and experiment in order to secure data for his comprehensive natural history, and he had solemnly warned against the danger of employing reason to formulate theories before all the evidence was in. Descartes, on the other hand, had emphasized reason and somewhat discounted the evidence of the senses. The scientists seize upon the difference. They assert that the experimental philosophy demands only that men patiently gather data, the explanation of which may be found elsewhere than in Descartes's philosophy. On the other hand Cartesianism was but a theory or hypothesis, rendered insecure because erected on too slim a factual foundation. They frequently point out Descartes's deficiency in that he did not experiment sufficiently, and where possible they take pleasure in pointing out his mistakes due to his failure to experiment. Boyle also remarks that the Cartesian hypothesis only furnishes delight to reasoning, speculative men, whereas Baconianism deals with nature and confers material benefits upon man. The scientists reduce the matter to a struggle between Bacon and Descartes, with God on Bacon's side. The experimenter who uses his eyes

narrative is a masterpiece of Old English prose, full of vigour and life.

The West Saxon translation of Gregory's *Dialogues* owed its inspiration directly to Alfred. The authorship of the translation has never been called in question; both Asser and William of Malmesbury attribute it to Werferth, bishop of Worcester, who undertook the task at the king's bidding. The book is partly in dialogue form. Gregory is found by his deacon, Peter, sitting "in a solitary place, very fit for a sad and melancholy disposition." The stories, which Gregory proceeds to tell, serve to relieve his mind of its weight of thought. The monk, Martinius, impresses the sign of the cross upon a hearth-cake with a motion of the hand; a sweet fragrance miraculously arises from the grave of count Theophanius; bishop Frigidianus turns the course of the Serchio by marking out its bed with a rake. Book II is exclusively devoted to St Benedict. The collection was an attempt to complete the accepted lives of the saints by a recital of miraculous deeds performed in Italy. Towards the end of the book Gregory leaves Italy and tells the story of St Hermenegild and his brother, king Reccarede. The preface, in the Oxford and Cambridge MSS, is the work of the king and is thus of particular interest—

[illegible]

I besought my faithful friends that they would write down out of holy books concerning the miracles of the saints the following narrative; that I, strengthened in my mind by admonition and love, might think upon spiritual things in the midst of my worldly cares.

The MSS of the *Dialogues* have given rise to interesting problems. The Cambridge and British Museum types are closely related and stand apart from that of Oxford. From this fact Krebs deduced the theory that the *Dialogues* were translated on two separate occasions. A more careful comparison of the MSS has shown that they are all derived from a single original, of which the Oxford type represents a revised version.

The West Saxon *Martyrology* may be ascribed to Alfred's reign. Cockayne was of opinion that the oldest MS—that in the British Museum—dates from the ninth century. It is noteworthy that the saints referred to belong either to the period preceding the king's reign or to the reign itself. Another proof of the age

point of inviting God to become an honorary fellow of the Royal Society. Needless to say, religious souls were shocked by his blasphemous enthusiasm, and another demerit was registered against science.

Not only did Restoration science have to struggle against anti-Puritan sentiment and the atheistic reputation of the mechanical philosophy; in an even more fundamental way it ran counter to the age. We have already noticed the distrust of reason which Bacon imposed upon his followers. Sir Francis had noted the misuse of reason conspicuous in the schoolmen and he was familiar with large philosophical systems which men had raised on very flimsy factual foundations. So he had acquired on the one hand an exaggerated idea of the amount of data requisite for true scientific thinking, and on the other a depreciation of reason, which he thought lured men to the airy regions of speculation. Furthermore, he found it especially necessary to warn men against the too ready use of reason if his natural history, the very foundation of his whole *Magna Instauratio*, was to be completed. His followers, who were almost fanatically committed to the history, continued the anti-rational spirit. The age, however, partly under the influence of ancient philosophy, partly under the influence of Descartes, and partly in reaction against Puritan religious fanaticism, was insisting that reason should be basic in religion, philosophy, morality, and æsthetics. So the anti-rationalistic spirit of science ran directly against one of the main values of the times, perhaps the most important. The opposition to science because of its attitude toward reason was so deep-seated and fundamental that it does not find frequent direct expression but plays an almost unconscious part in criticism of science expressed in other ways. It is true some of the scientists themselves were uneasy over the matter. Timothy Clerke, a very intelligent member of the Royal Society, in a manner contrary to the optimism of his fellow members says, 'I rather fear our tumbling into the greatest barbarity and most profound ignorance; the way to solid knowledge by cultivating of our reasons, and inuring them to compare, compute, and estimate well, begins now to be wholly despised.'[1] The hostile reaction to this aspect of the scientific movement, however, is seldom revealed in direct condemnation. It lies at the base of the scorn and satire

[1] *Some Papers Writ in the Year 1664* (1670), p. 2.

effect of his choice of models was to introduce a large Latin element into Old English prose style. Compared with the abrupt and rugged style of the king Cynewulf episode in the early part of the *Chronicle*, Alfred's prose is that of an accomplished writer: compared with later prose, it is largely tentative. It was not until nearly a century later that more definite results were achieved when Aelfric took up the task left incomplete by the West Saxon king. Apart from the historic estimate, Alfred has some personal claim to recognition as a prose-writer. His original passages, however much they may owe to undiscovered sources, embody his own personal convictions, and afford a remarkable proof of his ability to inform with life the materials at his disposal. In literature, personality is of the utmost importance, and Alfred is one of the most personal of writers. He is the embodiment, not only of the intellectual, but of the spiritual, thoughts of his time. His writings constantly reveal his aspirations after truth, and, even in the *Laws*, there is a definitely religious tone. "I have wished," he writes in *Boethius*, "to live worthily while I lived, and to leave to those who should come after me my memory in good deeds." And, in the language of the inscription on the monument erected to his memory at Wantage in 1877, he "found learning dead, and he restored it; education neglected, and he revived it."

were unlovely and their writings mere jargon, but they could at least despise the ancients, praise the name of Bacon, and shout Experiment! Experiment! Authentic scientists were somewhat confused and inconsistent in their attitude toward them, at one time reaching out helping hands, at another trying to dissociate themselves entirely from them. It is not hard to guess what the intelligent, non-scientific observer of the times thought of a science accompanied by this rabble. The result was that the bad company which the scientific movement kept, in spite of spasmodic efforts to get rid of them, lowered its dignity, which had with difficulty been rescued from the Puritans, and injured its credit with the intelligent public. This fact becomes all the more apparent when we remember that the critics of science had inherited a fastidious aversion to manual contact with material things, a characteristic of aristocratic learning, and did not view those beyond the social pale with any democratic sympathy. There were other reasons for the satiric attack on the experimental philosophy, but the presence of these Ishmaels in the Baconian cohorts increased the contempt with which science was viewed.

The extent to which opposition to experimental science discussed here appears in the anti-scientific literature of the Neo-Classical period can only be suggested now. The atheistic associations of the scientific movement would have produced much more satiric opposition, had so many supporters of the movement not been religious men and had great scientists like Boyle and Newton not remained on the side of the angels. Another reason is discovered in the fact that the charge of atheism was in general diverted from the scientists to the free-thinkers, who had been greatly influenced by science. The anti-rationalistic spirit and the emphasis upon sense-observation characteristic of Baconism played a fundamental part in the satire directed against it. For the chief sin which the satirists find in the experimentalists was the glaring faults of judgement which failed to distinguish between the worth of things and which proposed silly and impossible projects. The importance ascribed to small and insignificant matters by the scientific emphasis upon non-rational observation violated the hierarchy of values upon which neo-classical writers insisted. The naturalistic tendency of the new science and the utilitarian and vocational ideas of education which this science fostered were

The beginning of the *Chronicle* is usually ascribed to the influence of Alfred, and it continues for two and a half centuries after that king's reign, long after the last English king had been slain and the old tongue banished from court and school. Its principal recensions[1] differ from one another not in the main story, but in the attention given to various details, and in the length to which they are carried. Owing to the number of hands employed in its composition, the literary merit is very unequal; sometimes the entries consist of a date and the simple statement of an event; at others we find passages of fluent and glowing narrative, as in the record of the war-filled years from 911 to 924. The period from 925 to 975 is very bare, and such entries as exist relate mostly to church matters. It is, however, within this time that the principal poems of the *Chronicle* are inserted. Under 991 is told the story of Anlaf's raid at Maldon in which Byrhtnoth fell. In the years 975—1001, the *Chronicle* is of extreme interest, and the annals for the year 1001 are very full. Some time about the middle, or towards the last quarter, of the eleventh century the present recension of the Winchester chronicle was transplanted to Christ Church, Canterbury, and there completed with Canterbury annals, passages being interpolated in various places from beginning to end from the chronicle kept at St Augustine's, Christ Church library having been previously burnt. Before this, the notice taken of Canterbury events was so extremely slight that we do not even hear of the murder of archbishop Aelfhēah (St Alphege) by the Danes[2]. The MS known as Cott. Tib. A. VI seems to have been originally meant to serve as an introduction to further annals, which, however, were never written; and it is, apparently, a copy of the original Abingdon chronicle (itself a copy of the original Winchester, written at Abingdon), which did not reach beyond 977. The MS under consideration is shown, by a mass of internal and external evidence, to have been written about 977, the year to which its annals reach. It may fitly be called the *shorter* Abingdon chronicle to distinguish it from the *longer* Abingdon chronicle referred to below, with which it has

[1] The Winchester or Parker chronicle, in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge; the shorter Abingdon chronicle (Cott. Tib. A. VI); the longer Abingdon chronicle (Cott. Tib. B. I); the Evesham or Worcester chronicle (Cott. Tib. B. IV); the Peterborough chronicle (Bod. Laud. 636)

[2] The recension under notice is a copy of the original Winchester chronicle, which latter was also the source of the original Abingdon chronicle. Hence the agreement with Tib. A. VI, and Tib B. I, up to 892. Naturally, it does not incorporate the Mercian chronicle, but maintains a kind of separate parallelism from 894—915.

SWIFT'S EARLY BIOGRAPHERS

HAROLD WILLIAMS

SELECTION and arrangement are essential parts of the biographer's art, and of larger import than the crowded attempt to leave nothing unsaid. Plutarch bids us remember that the very man may often be discerned more clearly in his passing word or in actions of little note than in his great achievements. How many biographers in striving to relate all that a man did fail to show what he was. In our day it has become the fashion to write a man's life immediately upon his death, while recollection is fresh and popular interest unabated. Biographies flood the market, for publishers can count on a remunerative sale if the man or woman portrayed bore a name familiar to newspaper readers, whether for distinction, notoriety, or cheap fame. Further, impatience is fed with lives of the living; and biography, rivalling fiction in popularity, often falls into the same classification.

The life of an *author* calls for the arts of selection and arrangement in a degree beyond that demanded by the recorded achievement of men of action. The story of his life will lie in the written or spoken word, and these are more difficult to appraise than remembered deeds. Nevertheless English literature is enriched by outstanding biographies of writers, as, for example, Boswell's *Johnson* and Lockhart's *Scott*.

Sir Walter Raleigh notes that in earlier days 'a writer was wholly identified with his work'. In the sixteenth century 'there came the first serious attempt to put on record such facts as could be recovered concerning the great writers who had flourished in these islands'.[1] It was in the next century that Izaak Walton, with his rare kindliness of nature, wrote those brief lives containing intimate portrayals matchless of their kind. So we pass by others, including Aubrey and Anthony à Wood, down the steep descent to a commercial realization, in the earlier days of the eighteenth century, of an interest by common readers in lives of contemporaries. Edmund Curll, whom nothing could abash, first seized upon the selling value of cheap, and if possible scandalous, biographies. Few of the

[1] *Six Essays on Johnson*, pp. 98–100.

northern records. From 983—1022, he returned to his Abingd[illegible] source. After this he struck out on his own line. From th[illegible] original thus created was copied the extant MS commonly know[illegible] as the Worcester or Evesham chronicle[1], which shows especia[illegible] acquaintance with the midlands and north. The close connectio[illegible] between Worcester and York is shown by the fact that the archbishop of York is mentioned simply as "the archbishop." The chronicle shows strong feeling on the subject of Godwin's outlawry, and in every way supports that nobleman. Alone amongst the chronicles it tells the sad tale of the battle of Hastings. The original, from which the above chronicle was copied, seems also to have been the basis for that patriotic Kentish chronicle, now lost, which was the chief source both of the Peterborough chronicle up to 1123 and the recension known as Cott. Dom. A. VIII, 2.

The Peterborough chronicle[2] is the longest of all, extending to the year 1154. In 1116, the town and monastery of Peterborough were destroyed by a terrible fire, which left standing only the monastic chapterhouse and dormitory, and when, in 1121, the rebuilding was completed, the annals contained in this chronicle were undertaken to replace those lost in the fire. They were based on the lost Kentish chronicle, which must have been forwarded to Peterborough for that purpose. This original Kentish chronicle is full of patriotic feeling, and shows great knowledge of southern affairs from Canute's death, the burial of Harold Harefoot (the record of which it alone rightly tells) and the viking raid on Sandwich, to the feuds between English and Normans in the reign of the Confessor. It relates count Eustace's broils with the English at Canterbury and Dover, and the flight of archbishop Robert, leaving his pallium behind him, an annal recorded with dangerously schismatic glee. The scribe had lived at the court of William the Conqueror, and had, therefore, seen the face of the great enemy of the English. The entries for the tenth century are very meagre; but from 991 to 1075 they are much fuller and contain, among other contemporary records, the story of the ravages of Hereward. Towards the end of the chronicle, which is written in a somewhat rough and ready manner, occurs the famous passage, often quoted by historians, telling of the wretchedness of the common folk during the reign of Stephen and its civil wars.

From the lost Kentish chronicle is derived the recension known as F or Cott. Domitian A. VIII, 2, seemingly written by one hand

[1] Cott. Tib. B. iv.

[2] Bod. Laud. 636.

Ireland. The harsh strictures of an author who posed as Swift's friend won for Orrery's book a phenomenal popularity. It sold in thousands of copies, running into successive editions. Orrery was taken to task in *Observations upon Lord Orrery's Remarks* (1754), written by Dr. Patrick Delany, who had known Swift for thirteen years before his lordship became acquainted with him. Few, however, bought or read Delany's hesitant counterblast. Deference to high birth too often governed his pen. Next came Deane Swift, cousin to the Dean of St. Patrick's, with *An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character, of Dr. Jonathan Swift* (1755). Born in 1706 he had the advantage of coming into some slight touch with Swift in early years, but in no intimate way until an even later date than Orrery, indeed hardly till 1738. Deane Swift, it should be noted, although he ranged himself with the defenders of Swift's honour and reputation, entertained a strong aversion to Delany, who, so he believed, had chiefly in mind Mrs. Whiteway, his mother-in-law, and himself among those who sought 'to banish the Dean's best friends from about him, and make a monopoly of him to themselves'. In his knowledge of his distinguished cousin Deane Swift enjoyed an advantage in that original manuscripts came into his possession, including thirty-nine letters forming part of the collection later to be known as the *Journal to Stella*.

Almost thirty years were to pass before another biography, *The Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift* (1784), was to appear, written by one who had known Swift, Thomas Sheridan, son of the Thomas who, until his death in 1738, had been a close and intimate friend of the Dean of St. Patrick's and a constant companion of his lighter hours. The younger Sheridan, born in 1719, was Swift's godson. He recalled seeing him in 1735 when on a visit to his father's house at Cavan:

> I was there at his arrival, and during the whole time of his continuance there. It grieved me much to see such a change in him. His person was quite emaciated and bore the marks of many more years than had passed over his head. His memory greatly impaired, and his other faculties much on the decline. His temper peevish, fretful, morose, and prone to sudden fits of passion; and yet to me his behaviour was gentle, as it always had been from my early childhood, . . . I loved him from my boyish days, and never stood in the least awe before him.[1]

[1] *Life*, p. 386.

It has already been said that this portion of the *Chronicle* contains several fragments of verse. These will be noticed later. Here, it may, however, be remarked that some passages, written as prose, are based on songs which have been inserted, after some slight modification, by the scribe; and, towards the end of the Peterborough chronicle, there occur some long stretches of rhythmic prose almost akin to the sung verse of the people. These may be either a development of the loose rhythm of Aelfric's prose, or may, possibly, result from the incorporation of ballads and their reduction to prose. The subject is, however, still too obscure to admit of any very definite statement on this point, and most of what has been said on this subject seems far removed from finality.

From this brief description of the manuscripts of the *Chronicle* we must turn to the homilists, who showed especial vigour between 960 and 1020. The development reached in style and in literary tradition is at once apparent; it had its origin, doubtless, in the religious revival of the tenth century, which emanated from Fleury, and was identified in England with the names of Dunstan, Aethelwold and Oswald, the "three torches" of the church.

At the beginning of the tenth century, English monasticism and, therefore, the state of learning in England, were in a deplorable condition, from which all the efforts of king Alfred had been unable to lift them. There were religious houses, of course, but most of these seem to have been in the condition of Abingdon when Aethelwold was appointed abbot—"a place in which a little monastery had been kept up from ancient days, but then desolate and neglected, consisting of mean buildings and possessing only a few hides." To the influence of the Benedictine reformers we owe much of the prose literature of the tenth and eleventh centuries. The great bond thus knit once more between English literature and the literature of the continent ensured our share in what was then living of classical and pseudo-classical lore.

With the accession of Edgar (959) better times dawned. On the death of Odo, Dunstan became archbishop, and, in 961, Oswald, Odo's nephew, was consecrated to the see of Worcester. His appointment was followed in 963 by that of Aethelwold, abbot of Abingdon, to the see of Winchester, and the three bishops set about a vigorous ecclesiastical reform. During the reigns of Edgar and his sons no fewer than forty monasteries for men were founded or restored, and these were peopled chiefly by monks trained at Abingdon or Winchester.

him into tortuous mazes. 'But', as he writes, 'to return from these many digressions . . .'; and he does return to follow Swift through the course of his life.

Sheridan is the orthodox biographer, who, reviewing his predecessors, finds much to condemn and little to praise. His own work is disposed in proper order. About half consists of fairly direct narrative. There follows a full selection 'of such Private Memoirs, as were not meant to meet the publick eye'; and thereafter, invoking the example of Plutarch, he reserves to 'a separate part of the Work, such Anecdotes, Memoirs, and detached Pieces, as could not have been interwoven into the history, without much interruption'.

Meanwhile three compilations had appeared, and of these one deserves commendation. Two may be briefly dismissed. In 1752 J. Cooper, an obscure publisher, brought out the anonymous *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Jonathan Swift*, a thin duodecimo and now a rare book, made up by an unblushing selection from Orrery's *Remarks*. Six years later came W. H. Dilworth's *Life*, published shortly after the posthumous appearance in 1758 of Swift's *Four Last Years of the Queen*. Dilworth was an industrious compiler of cheap biographies. His book consists of borrowings from Orrery and Delany with a few trivial comments of his own, followed by anecdotes and a culling from Mrs. Pilkington. In contrast, although as an editor he has many shortcomings, the *Life* prefixed by John Hawkesworth to his edition of Swift's *Works* is a creditable performance. Sheridan praised him as a man of 'clear judgment, and great candour', who 'wiped away many of the aspersions that had been thrown on Swift's character; and placed it, so far as he went, in its proper light'. Hawkesworth, who received some help from Johnson, cites authority for his statements and shows critical discrimination. For want of better information he makes mistakes, reproduces errors, and falls into some misunderstandings; but he was far from prepared to accept his authorities upon complete trust, he questions doubtful anecdotes and reasons judiciously. The words with which he concludes his appraisement of Swift's character—'upon the whole it will be found uncommonly steady and uniform'—may fairly be adopted as a judgement of his biography.

In any estimate of the early biographers of Swift it must be remembered that the first three had thoughts ulterior to the

homilies are sermons, properly so called; but the later are largely narrative in character, and are based on legendary sources.

The style of these homilies stands midway between the style of Alfred and that of Aelfric; it is more developed than the one, more primitive than the other; it is rude, vehement and homely, more indulgent of legend and shows the primitive love for recitative; the syntax is clumsy, and the vocabulary often archaic. On the other hand, the treatment is sometimes very poetical, though this characteristic appears rather in simile and metaphor than in rhythm of structure. "The redness of the rose glitters in thee, and the whiteness of the lily shines in thee," says Gabriel to Mary; and Heaven is pictured as a place where there "is youth without age; nor is there hunger nor thirst, nor wind nor storm nor rush of waters." The palm branch in the hand of the angel who announces to the Virgin her approaching death is "bright as the morning star," and the Lord appears to Andrew with a face "like that of a fair child." Equally poetical are the passages that deal with more sombre themes, such as doomsday, the lamentation of the lost at the harrowing of hell and the vision of St Paul of the souls clinging to the cliffs from which the devils sought to drag them away. Morris has pointed out that there is a good deal of similarity between this last passage and the well-known lines in *Beowulf* which describe the "rimy groves" which grew above the abyss where Grendel had his home. But exactly similar descriptions are found in all other versions of this aged legend[1]. Aelfric, it is true, rejected the legend on critical grounds, but the coming centuries were to see it become the basis of a masterpiece of the world's poetry. Comparisons of these Old English legends with their sources and cognate branches lead to the conclusion that the poetic element which was inherent in them could scarcely be destroyed altogether, however poor the translation might be.

The probable date of these homilies is towards the close of the third quarter of the tenth century; they refer to the universal belief, based on a misunderstanding of the Talmudic metaphor prevailing throughout the *Revelation of St John*, that the year 1000 would see the end of the world; and one of them, the eleventh, contains a statement to the effect that it was composed in 971. This date cannot be accepted as indisputably that of the whole collection; the passage may be an interpolation, and,

[1] Cf. the Provençal.

well as of Swift. When Orrery was occupied with his translation of the letters Dr. Birch took satisfaction in the thought that Pliny would 'at last have justice done in our language by a genius equal to his own'.[1] Nevertheless the success of the *Remarks* was primarily due to indignant surprise at the 'strange office' of a writer who sent abroad such harsh judgements upon a friend. Warburton presumed revenge to be the motive, for Orrery, he declared, had told him that he 'pursued that friendship so sedulously, that he suffered numberless indignities from Swift, before he could be admitted to any degree of familiarity'.[2] The tale may be doubted, for Swift's correspondence shows a decent regard for Orrery, and he employed him on a trusted commission with the manuscript of *The Four Last Years of the Queen*. Another story[3] is that Orrery having one day gained admission to Swift's library discovered a letter of his own written several years before, lying still unopened, on which Swift had written, 'This will keep cold.'

The writer has in his possession a copy of the Dublin *Literary Journal* for January–February 1752 which was sent to Orrery by George Faulkner. Orrery had the number specially bound with title-labels on the front and back covers. On a blank page he records his opinion of criticisms already published, his judgement of the particular notice, and his readiness to 'review my performance, and alter & correct in many places'. This modest and candid observation upon his own book suggests a more favourable estimate of his character than is commonly entertained. A copy of the *Remarks*, copiously annotated by Orrery himself, now in the Houghton Library, Harvard, was probably intended for use in preparing a corrected and enlarged edition.

Patrick Delany raised himself from humble beginnings to a fellowship of Trinity College, Dublin, ecclesiastical preferment, reputation as an eloquent preacher, and successive marriages with two ladies of substance, an advantage which he employed in cultivating the hospitalities of the dinner-table. His long and intimate friendship with Swift marked him out as a fitting antagonist of Orrery. But he was slow to move. Two years passed before his *Observations upon Lord Orrery's Remarks* appeared, and he then hid himself behind anonymity. In contradistinction to Orrery he wrote a lucid, flowing, and eloquent style,

[1] Nichols, *Lit. Illustr.* iv. 528. [2] Nichols, *Lit. Anec.* ii. 232 n.
[3] George-Monck Berkeley, *Literary Relics*, p. xvi.

collection. This gives only thirty-nine; but, if the two sermons for mid-Lent Sunday are counted separately, we arrive at the proper number. The two series were designed to give alternate sermons for the greater feast-days, the first series being simple, doctrinal and instructive, the second discursive, historical and more elaborate, with much narrative[1].

Although the subjects of the sermons are appropriate to the days for which they were intended, there is also an attempt to give a large survey of biblical and ecclesiastical history. Thus, the first homily of the first series, *De Initio Creaturae*, treats not only of creation, but relates the stories of the fall, the flood, the dispersal of tongues, the patriarchs and the Mosaic law. Then follows another, *De Natale Domini*, which gives the life of Christ from His birth to His ascension. The second series treats more particularly of the history of the apostles, the origin of monastic life, the foundation of the English church under Gregory the Great and its expansion in the days of St Cuthbert. The didactic element is less pronounced in the second part than in the first, and, while the first part seems to have been intended for the instruction of the ignorant in the primary facts of their belief, the second is devoted mainly to the exposition of the teaching of the church. It is in this second series that we find the famous sermon on the Eucharist which, owing to the difficulty of expressing in the unaccustomed English tongue the undeveloped and indefinite standpoint of the period, has led to much controversy, based on the mistake of reading into the tenth century the ideas of modern times. The reformers gave us our first editions of this sermon in the form of controversial pamphlets.

The chief sources of these sermons were, as the homilist himself tells us, the works of St Augustine, St Jerome, St Gregory, Bede, Smaragdus and Haymo. Förster regards the homilies of St Gregory as the groundwork. Additional sources are Alcuin, Gregory of Tours and Rufinus, the *Vitae Patrum* of Ratramnus, and many others. The English song on St Thomas he did not use, and he

[1] The manuscripts of these homilies vary much in arrangement of matter, and it has been supposed that three recensions existed. The first answers to Thorpe's edition of the Cambridge MS, in which the two parts are kept asunder and all the prefaces are retained, although other matter is also found. The second is represented by such MSS as C.C.C.C. 188, which has only the first set of sermons, no prefaces, some sermons divided and the homily on the nativity of Our Lady following that on the birth of St John. It has also a new sermon for a confessor's feast, with the statement that, although the author had written it for another (Aethelwold, bishop of Winchester, 1007—1015), yet he was to have a copy of it himself. Hence, this recension dates after 1007. Thirdly, there are several MSS in which both parts are recast together in the order of the church year, with additional sermons.

Johnson, as we know, held a poor opinion of Sheridan, declaring that 'vanity and Quixotism obscured his merits'. Although later Johnson expressed a readiness to be reconciled Sheridan avoided the opportunity of a meeting provided by Boswell.[1] There is, however, no reason to attribute to ill feeling his onslaught upon Johnson's *Life*. Even the Doctor's friends, so Murphy tells us, 'trembled for him when he was writing' it.[2] Boswell is constrained to admit 'that he had an unfavourable bias' against Swift.[3] It cannot be denied that, however anxious Johnson may have been to exercise a balanced moderation, he could never altogether get over his dislike. When writing the *Lives* he was, further, too prone to trust to memory and to avoid the labour of looking up his references.[4]

As Sheridan was impelled to champion Swift against the challenges and detractions of Johnson it is worth asking how far he was a fair opponent and how far his thrusts went truly home.

Sheridan maintained that Johnson, holding Swift in 'very little estimation', was in no way 'qualified to give any account of him with the least degree of accuracy'. The first example of careless indifference he selects is Johnson's offhand statement that, although Swift himself claimed to have been born in Dublin, yet Pope told Spence that Swift informed him 'that he was born in the town of Leicester', and that in any event, 'The question may, without much regret, be left in the obscurity in which he delighted to involve it'. With all respect to Johnson it is not easy to excuse this kind of thing. He need neither have been in doubt nor paraded a supercilious indifference to accuracy. Orrery stated emphatically that, although many believed Swift 'a native of *England*', he was undoubtedly born in Dublin. Deane Swift appended to his *Essay* Swift's fragment of biography, printed from the autograph manuscript, as stated both on the title-page of the *Essay* and in a footnote on page 7. In this sketch Swift recorded that he was born in Dublin. Johnson, it is true, does say, 'Jonathan Swift was, according to an account said to be written by himself, . . . born at Dublin.' In what way, however, persisting on a wrong course, was he justified in casting doubt upon the manuscript? Deane Swift said that it *was* written by Swift, and that it had been 'lately pre-

[1] Boswell's *Life*, Hill-Powell, iv. 330.
[2] Hill, *Johnsonian Miscellanies*, i. 479.
[3] *Life*, Hill-Powell, iv. 61.
[4] Ibid., 36 n. 3.

In many of the MSS which contain the grammar it is followed by a Latin-English *Vocabulary*, the earliest of its kind extant, arranged according to subjects, not alphabetically, and largely derived from the etymologies of St Isidore. That it is Aelfric's is proved not only by its inclusion in the manuscript containing the grammar, without any pause between them, but also by the presence of many words characteristic of his vocabulary.

The *Colloquy*, of which only two MSS exist, is exceedingly interesting both in method and theme. It is in the form of a conversation between the teacher, a novice and a number of other persons representing the various occupations of the day. The ploughman tells how he leads his oxen to the field, while the neatherd, like Caedmon in Bede's famous story, takes them at night to the stable and stands watching over them for fear of thieves. The shepherd guards his sheep against the wolf and makes butter and cheese. The hunter captures harts and hares and is rewarded by the king with horses and collars, while the merchant trades in palls and silk, gold and precious stones, strange garments, perfumes, wine and oil, ivory, brass, tin, glass and silver. Last of all, the novice describes the division of his day, and how, if he sleeps through the bell for nocturnes, his comrades awaken him with rods. The authorship is proved by a note in one of the MSS:—*Hanc sententiam latini sermonis olim Aelfricus Abbas composuit, qui meus fuit magister, sed tamen ego Aelfricus Bata multas postea huic addidi appendices.* The colloquy has an Old English gloss, which is certainly not the work of Aelfric. The additions made by Aelfric's disciple to the text, with the object of providing more matter for practice, in every way destroy the simplicity and neatness of the original.

In one MS of Aelfric's *Grammar* we meet the famous version of the *Distichs of Cato*. Hence, there has been a certain tendency to ascribe these also to Aelfric. They are marked by clearness of expression and show great sense of adaptability. They seem to be a combination of two translations, one to distich 68, the other to the end. Two of the distichs are taken from Aelfric's *Deuteronomy*, and the fact that one of the three MSS in which these distichs are contained also includes the *Grammar*, both works being written in one hand, places them, at any rate, in close connection with Aelfric's school[1]. It is, perhaps, best to regard them as the result of Aelfric's influence.

These school-books were followed in 996 or 997 by a third

[1] The MS is Trin. Coll. Camb. R. 9. 17.

you speak of, I neither know him nor ever heard of him till the Key mentioned him.'[1] Johnson, as a responsible biographer, ought not to have expressed doubts based on internal evidence, which, on his authority, were bound to mislead, when weighty external evidence had long been published confirming Swift's authorship of *A Tale of a Tub*.

Even more is Sheridan aroused to indignation by Johnson's suggestion that the *Battle of the Books* was borrowed from a French work called *Combat des Livres*, and by Johnson's refusal to accept the statement of 'An Apology', prefixed to the fifth edition of *A Tale*, that the author had never 'seen any such Treatise in his Life nor heard of it before'. Johnson's rejection of this statement was in questionable taste, as there is not the least probability that he had ever seen the French book, which he refers to by a title it never bore. This is what Johnson says: 'The improbability of such a coincidence of thoughts without communication is not, in my opinion, balanced by the anonymous protestation prefixed, in which all knowledge of the French book is peremptorily disowned.' Johnson takes the plagiarism for granted and refuses to accept the disclaimer because it is anonymous, whereas, as Sheridan quite reasonably remarks, nearly everything Swift wrote was anonymous. He concludes with charging Johnson with such 'gross prejudice and want of candour, as should make the reader cautious how he gives any credit to the many other misrepresentations' of Swift and his character.

It was William Wotton who first, in 1705, in some 'Observations upon the Tale of a Tub', suggested that Swift's *Battle* was a borrowed piece of work. 'I have been assured that the *Battel in St.* James's *Library* is *Mutatis Mutandis* taken out of a *French* Book entitled, *Combat des Livres*, if I misremember not.' This is casual. Surely Wotton ought, before making such an assertion, to have looked up the French book and collated it to see what parallelisms he could discover? To begin with he would have failed to discover a French book of the title. It is probable that Wotton's informant alluded to a book by François de Callières published anonymously in 1688. Its title was *Histoire Poëtique de la Guerre nouvellement declarée entre les Anciens et les Modernes*. Others besides Johnson have followed Wotton, and among them Sir Walter Scott,[2] who has no hesitation in asserting that

[1] *Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, ed. F. Elrington Ball, i. 183–6.

[2] *Memoirs of Swift* (1814), pp. 45–6.

interesting of all are those of the English saints, St Oswald, St Edmund and St Swithun. In the first two we see portrayed the ideal king of the Old English, protector and benefactor of his people. Oswald breaks in pieces the silver dish on which his meat is served, and commands Aidan to distribute the pieces among the suppliants for his charity; St Edmund, after his subjects have been slaughtered by the Danes, no longer desires life. "This I wish in my mind, that I should not be left alone after my dear thanes, who in their very beds, with their wives and children, have, by these sea-goers, suddenly been slain." In the life of St Swithun we have reminiscences of the happy time under king Edgar, "when the kingdom still continued in peace, so that no fleet was heard of save that of the folk themselves who held this land."

The date of these *Lives* is known almost to the very year. They are not dedicated, like the others, to archbishop Sigeric, because he had died in 995; and they cannot have been written earlier than 996, because in the sermon on Ash Wednesday Aethelwold, who was canonised in that year, is spoken of as "the holy bishop who now worketh miracles." But, as Aelfric says that he borrowed his homily on St Edmund from Abbo of Fleury's life of that saint (986), which came into his hands a few years after it was written, they cannot well be much later than 997.

Appended to the best MSS of the *Lives of the Saints* is an English version of Alcuin's *Interrogationes Sigewulfi Presbyteri in Genesin*. It begins with a preface and introduction on Alcuin and the Latin text, which consisted of a series of catechetical answers to questions on *Genesis*, asked by Alcuin's friend, Sigewulf. Then follow the translated *interrogationes*, abridged from a hundred and seventy-eight to forty-eight essentials. The first fifteen are on the moral law of the Creator and His creatures; the next five, relating to the material creation, contain an insertion on the planets, derived from Bede by Aelfric, who was devoted to the study of astronomy; then come four on the manifestations of the Trinity in nature. These are succeeded by a series on man's creation in the divine image and his end, followed by others on the origin of evil. Last of all are questions on the ages of the world, and the whole is concluded by a creed and the doxology. Aelfric is nowhere stated to be the author, but the similarity of the translation to his acknowledged work in style, structure and rhythm enables us to ascribe it to him with some confidence.

Two other works, closely connected in style and theme, also

the Queen's death, and which he resigned, as he says himself, "multa gemens" (with many a groan).' The inference the ordinary reader would draw from this is fairly put by Sheridan —'that though Swift rejected the offer of so paltry a sum as fifty pounds, he was not proof against so large a bribe as that of a thousand.' I shall not follow Sheridan in detail, for I think if it had been put straightforwardly to Johnson he might, possibly might, have been induced to admit that he was bringing into conjunction two disconnected and incomparable incidents, and that in quoting Swift's words, 'multa gemens', he had given them a wrong turn and jumped over a sundering gap in Swift's life. In the *Journal to Stella* Swift declares that he was so offended by Oxford's offer of a bank-bill for £50 that he could hardly be reconciled to him. This may have seemed to Johnson, and not unjustifiably when he thought of his own penurious days, a superfluous strain of heroism. But Swift's position in relation to the Tory Ministry was on a different plane. He had come to London carrying a commission from the Irish Archbishops and Bishops. He was received on familiar social terms by Harley and St. John. Oxford's offer of £50 placed him, so he felt, on a level with hired party scribblers. He was genuinely injured in spirit. The only recognition he was prepared to accept was ecclesiastical preferment. As we well know, the best that could be done in the end was the Deanery of St. Patrick's, Dublin. And this is where the £1,000 to which Dr. Johnson alludes comes in. When Swift was presented to the Deanery of St. Patrick's he found himself faced with heavy charges. His predecessor, Dean Stearne, had built for himself a fine new deanery house. On account of the house Swift was obliged to pay £800, and, in addition, £150 in respect of first-fruits, and £50 in respect of his patent, which all adds up to £1,000, a staggering demand to meet for one whose income ran to something between £200 and £300 a year. The induction grant, which Swift might reasonably have expected, he never received, although the Exchequer order seems to have reached him. Thirteen years after his installation he wrote ironically to Pope: 'I forgave Sir Robert Walpole a thousand pounds, *multa gemens.*' The complaint was not serious. He wrote jestingly. He never had much hope of the money. The casual allusion was penned many years after his rejection of Oxford's bank-bill for £50. The two sums had no relationship to each other. Dr. Johnson forced

the book of *Genesis* than the story of Isaac, since another had translated it from that point to the end. In the MS in the Cambridge University Library only chapters i—xxiv of *Genesis* are given, and Dietrich has observed that the style thenceforward to the end of *Leviticus* is essentially different. In the fourth book of Moses Aelfric's style is once more recognisable, and alliteration again occurs. It is possible that Aelfric may have worked over another translation of the books of *Numbers* and *Deuteronomy*; but he himself tells us, in *De Veteri et de Novo Testamento*, that he had translated *Joshua* and *Judges* at the request of Aethelweard. The book of *Judges* was added afterwards: it was probably intended originally to be included, like the homily on the *Maccabees*, in the series of *Saints' Lives*. It is composed entirely in Aelfric's usual rhythm, and ends with a short notice of the good kings Alfred, Aethelstan and Edgar, who put to flight the Danes and fostered religion and learning. With the exception of *Daniel* the work consists merely of extracts. Since the *Lives* were written in 996, and other homiletic work had followed, these paraphrases seem to date from 997, and, in their completed state, from 998. It is important to note in them that Aelfric merely signs himself as monk. They were, probably, the last work done for Aethelweard, who is not heard of after 999. But Aelfric's close friendship with his son continued and bore important fruit in later years.

Three other biblical paraphrases or homilies may be traced to Aelfric. In his tractate on the Old Testament he observes that he formerly made in English a discourse or short exposition of *Job*, and also that he had turned into English the book of *Esther*. The MS of *Job* is lost, but a copy printed by L'Isle in 1638 shows unmistakable signs of Aelfric's workmanship, and the theme resembles that of his other works; thus, a passage on Antichrist is strongly reminiscent of some sentences in the preface to the first series of homilies, and the whole treatment corresponds to that of the thirty-fifth homily of the second series. *Esther*, which also exists only in L'Isle's transcript, seems originally to have belonged to the *Saints' Lives*. It is a series of extracts in Aelfric's customary alliterative rhythm.

Aelfric also mentions, in the same place, a work on the apocryphal book of *Judith*, but without claiming the authorship. "It is also," he says, "arranged in English in our manner, as an example to you men, that you should defend your land with weapons against the hostile host." These words were formerly supposed to refer to the beautiful poem *Judith*, which is found

whose identity was not then discovered, and is unlikely to be now.

It is not always that we show at our best, not always that we occupy ourselves with a congenial task. Johnson was out of sympathy with Swift; he could not wholly overcome a measure of dislike. The *Life* he wrote, however, cannot be accounted either careless or perfunctory, although it is only about one-third the length of that devoted to Pope, half the length of Savage's, shorter than Addison's, less than half Dryden's, and about the same as Cowley's. Nevertheless he was at some trouble and gathered relevant and informative facts. If, as he says, he communicated his thoughts to Hawkesworth, when the latter was occupied with his *Life of Swift*, he was clearly not attempting to write upon an author to whom before he had given no consideration. On the other hand Sheridan is not to be dismissed as the irascible friend; or as counsel for the defence seeking to put his adversary in the wrong. His objections are fair comment, he covers the ground well, and Johnson comes out of the encounter rather rumpled and shaken.

On the other side of the question it must not be forgotten that a long list can easily be gathered of Johnson's generous and appreciative tributes to Swift's character and genius. Two examples must serve, one near the beginning of the *Life*, the other at the end. Commenting upon Swift's failure to make the best use of his undergraduate days Johnson tells us that, in contrition, he resolved to devote eight hours each day to study, 'and continued his industry for seven years'. He then continues: 'This part of his story well deserves to be remembered; it may afford useful admonition and powerful encouragement to men whose abilities have been made for a time useless by their passions and pleasures, and who, having lost one part of life in idleness, are tempted to throw away the remainder in despair.' And none could ask in praise more than Johnson's concluding words: 'Perhaps no writer can easily be found that has borrowed so little, or that in all his excellences and all his defects has so well maintained his claim to be considered as original.'

ment[1]: "Sevenfold gifts he giveth yet to mankind, concerning which I wrote formerly in a certain other writing in the English speech." This homily is seventh from the superscription, which only seems to apply to those immediately following it (two in number). We are, therefore, as Napier in his work on Wulfstan pointed out, justified in rejecting the ascription of the seventh homily to Wulfstan, and it may be by Aelfric.

In 1005, Aelfric was called from Wessex to Mercia. The thane Aethelmaer, who had formerly invited him to Cerne, and for whom many of his works had been composed, had recently acquired two estates in Oxfordshire, which he, in turn, presented to his newly founded abbey of Eynsham. These are interesting on account of their connection with the hero of Maldon, himself a patron of learning, who had fallen, some fourteen years before, fighting against the Danes[2]. Hither Aethelmaer retired for the rest of his life, and hither he summoned Aelfric as first abbot. The monastery followed the Benedictine rule, and it was for the instruction of its inmates that Aelfric wrote, soon after his instalment there, the Latin *Letter to the Monks of Eynsham*, to which reference has already been made. His object was to give an account of the rule as practised at Winchester, and he says that the source of his information is bishop Aethelwold's *De Consuetudine Monachorum*, by which title, as we have already seen, he refers, in all probability, to Aethelwold's *Regularis Concordia*.

It is in the preface to this letter that Aelfric speaks of the years spent by him in the school of Aethelwold, and, as a further acknowledgment of the debt he owed his great master, he composed soon afterwards, in Latin, his *Vita Aethelwoldi*. In the preface to this *Life*, Aelfric calls himself abbot and alumnus of Winchester, and, greeting Kenulph, bishop of Winchester, and the brethren of the monastery there, he says that it now seems right to him to recall to men's memory some of the deeds of their father and great teacher, St Aethelwold (d. 984), who had been dead for twenty years. Since Kenulph was not appointed to the see till 1006, and died either the same year or the next, the *Life* must have been finished about this time. Of the two recensions of the *Life*, one, by Aelfric alone, shows his usual characteristics; the other is apparently Aelfric's life, "written over" by Wulfstan, precentor of Winchester, with additional matter concerning posthumous miracles.

[1] *De Veteri et de Novo Testamento*, preface.
[2] See p. 144.

to be called upon to fill gaps. There can be no quarrel with conjecture so long as it is not labelled as fact. Unfortunately, some conjectures about Swift have been repeated so often that their conjectural nature has been forgotten. It has been said, for example, that Swift's grievance was that at the age of six he was torn ruthlessly from his mother and sent to a boarding-school. As the sending of very young boys to boarding-school was and is a common practice among the well-to-do classes in Great Britain, and as this is generally regarded as a high privilege for the child, especially if, as in Swift's case, the school is a good one, this explanation of Swift's anger is not very plausible. Along with this theory often goes the implication that at the time Swift was sent to Kilkenny Mrs. Swift went back to England. For this there is no evidence whatever. It is safe to assume that when Jonathan, at the age of four, was brought back from Whitehaven by the nurse who had kidnapped him three years earlier, his mother was still in Dublin. But I know of no definite *evidence* that she returned to Leicester before Swift was twenty, though it is generally assumed that she did so some time in the middle of her son's boyhood.

Other suggested explanations of Swift's dissatisfaction have to do with his being sent to Trinity College, Dublin, as a pensioner, and with the supposed neglect of him by his uncle's family during his seven years of college life. There is more to support these theories than there is to support the one first mentioned. Swift's own words in his *Autobiography* are: '. . . in the university at Dublin . . . by the ill treatment of his nearest relations, he was so discouraged and sunk in his spirits that he too much neglected his academic studies. . . .' But this does not specify the nature of the ill treatment, nor does it completely account for the bitterness and tenacity of Swift's feelings about his education.

Puzzling lately over the phrase 'the education of a dog', I began to make new conjectures to explain it. I rejected the supposition that Mrs. Swift had left Ireland when her son was six, partly for the reasons already given, partly because Swift's *Autobiography* hints of no dissatisfaction with Kilkenny School, and partly because I could not believe that the strong bond between Swift and his mother could have been formed if she had been in charge of him only from his fourth to his sixth year. The next question was, obviously, 'When did Mrs. Swift leave

ment[1]: "Sevenfold gifts he giveth yet to mankind, concerning which I wrote formerly in a certain other writing in the English speech." This homily is seventh from the superscription, which only seems to apply to those immediately following it (two in number). We are, therefore, as Napier in his work on Wulfstan pointed out, justified in rejecting the ascription of the seventh homily to Wulfstan, and it may be by Aelfric.

In 1005, Aelfric was called from Wessex to Mercia. The thane Aethelmaer, who had formerly invited him to Cerne, and for whom many of his works had been composed, had recently acquired two estates in Oxfordshire, which he, in turn, presented to his newly founded abbey of Eynsham. These are interesting on account of their connection with the hero of Maldon, himself a patron of learning, who had fallen, some fourteen years before, fighting against the Danes[2]. Hither Aethelmaer retired for the rest of his life, and hither he summoned Aelfric as first abbot. The monastery followed the Benedictine rule, and it was for the instruction of its inmates that Aelfric wrote, soon after his instalment there, the Latin *Letter to the Monks of Eynsham*, to which reference has already been made. His object was to give an account of the rule as practised at Winchester, and he says that the source of his information is bishop Aethelwold's *De Consuetudine Monachorum*, by which title, as we have already seen, he refers, in all probability, to Aethelwold's *Regularis Concordia*.

It is in the preface to this letter that Aelfric speaks of the years spent by him in the school of Aethelwold, and, as a further acknowledgment of the debt he owed his great master, he composed soon afterwards, in Latin, his *Vita Aethelwoldi*. In the preface to this *Life*, Aelfric calls himself abbot and alumnus of Winchester, and, greeting Kenulph, bishop of Winchester, and the brethren of the monastery there, he says that it now seems right to him to recall to men's memory some of the deeds of their father and great teacher, St Aethelwold (d. 981), who had been dead for twenty years. Since Kenulph was not appointed to the see till 1006, and died either the same year or the next, the *Life* must have been finished about this time. Of the two recensions of the *Life*, one, by Aelfric alone, shows his usual characteristics; the other is apparently Aelfric's life, "written over" by Wulfstan, precentor of Winchester, with additional matter concerning posthumous miracles.

[1] *De Veteri et de Novo Testamento*, preface.
[2] See p. 144

the expense of giving Jonathan an English education—these were questions to which Jonathan would never be able to give a reasoned answer. Then and forever, in his eyes, he had been given 'the education of a dog'.

There are possible variations on this theme. For example, the impetus of Mrs. Swift's request may have been an addition to her small independent income through some gift or legacy from her own family, which led her to feel that she could once more afford to live in that expensive country, England, though she would not be able to support Jonathan at Oxford. The chief point at issue would, however, have remained the same, and so would the result of the argument between her and Godwin Swift.

Is there enough evidence to justify publishing this theory? A man is notoriously incapable of valuing his own theories accurately, so I hesitate to express an opinion. At the moment I am inclined to say no. There are more than enough conjectures about Swift on the market already. Why, then, do I inflict another? To answer this I must ask leave to compare my conjecture with one which I have fabricated solely for the purpose of contrast. I present it with a great deal of trepidation. I do not believe in it for a minute. But it may have a temporary usefulness, after which I hope it can be completely forgotten. I may plead in partial excuse that it deals, not with an eighteenth-century subject, but with an early nineteenth-century one, the sailing venture in which Shelley met his death. It runs thus. Shortly after Shelley, his friend Williams, and their crew of one set out from Livorno it became evident that a storm was brewing. Shelley always reacted emotionally to storms. This one moved him suddenly to confess to Williams that he was in love with Williams's wife Jane, that he had declared his love to her (cf. the poem, 'We meet not as we parted'), and that the only thing for Williams to do, on a really high plane, was to resign his interest in Jane to Shelley. This, not unnaturally, startled Williams into remonstrance. Shelley persisted, and in order to devote himself to his argument with less hindrance, made fast the sheet, which had been in his charge, and came forward. The wind was rising; Williams attempted at the same time to calm Shelley and to reef the sails, as a nearby ship's-captain was shouting to him to do. But Shelley, concerned with what he deemed a more important

from pointing out that the earlier usage of the church required celibacy from all the clergy, and the letter is a prolonged argument on this theme.

Aelfric's last important work was a pastoral letter written for Wulfstan, who, from 1002 to 1023, was archbishop of York, and, till 1016, held also the see of Worcester, being thus a neighbour of the abbot of Eynsham. It falls into two parts, of which the first speaks of the three periods of the law, and goes on to the theme already treated in the letters to Wulfsige and Sigferth. The subject of the marriage of the clergy is reviewed from a historical standpoint, and the letter further admonishes the clergy on the celebration of the Eucharist, as their great function, and treats of the seven grades of holy orders. The second part deals with the use of the holy oils and the administration of the last sacraments to the dying. Mass was not to be said in laymen's houses, nor churches used for worldly purposes. The work must have been composed after 1014, since it contains a quotation from Aethelred's laws of that date; and, probably, before 1016, when Wulfstan's connection with Worcester came to an end. The epistles were written in Latin and translated into English by Aelfric himself, at Wulfstan's request, in the following year.

Aelfric's life was now drawing to a close. The exact date of his death is not known, but he died, probably, soon after 1020. His last years were passed in times not favourable for literary work. They were eventful years for England, for they witnessed the Danish sack of Canterbury in 1011, the murder of St Alphege by the Danes at Greenwich, the flight of Aethelred before Sweyn, the strife of Edmund Ironside and Canute and Canute's final triumph.

Aelfric was not only the greatest prose writer, he was also the most distinguished English-writing theologian, in his own time and for five centuries afterwards. Yet he was in no sense an original thinker; his homilies, as he frankly states, are borrowed from others, and in them he reflects the thought of the [illegible] especially the teaching of St Augustine its great Father. [illegible] object was to convey to the simple and unlearned the [illegible] of the Fathers; and in this he was pre-eminently [illegible] Dunstan and Aethelwold first kindled the flame, it was [illegible] through dark years of strife and warfare, when [illegible] were absorbed by the pressing anxieties of their daily life [illegible] the lamp alight and reminded them of spiritual [illegible]. [illegible] influence lasted long after his death, as is shown by the many late

Are there any records of Mrs. Swift's sources of income, or of gifts or legacies to her? Is there any untraced correspondence with or about the Thomas Swift connexion which may prove of value? Other lines of investigation may become evident to those who chance to meet with my conjecture. In any event, it is the sort of conjecture for which a wide net must be flung if it is to be proved or disproved. So I give it to the public, hoping that someone, in the course of time, will find means to settle the questions it raises.

them; while Aelfric loves what has some philosophy in it, for even his simplicity is often profound. In a word, Wulfstan is a judge and legalist, Aelfric a contemplative student.

This difference in tone is explained partly by temperament, partly by the circumstances of their lives. Aelfric, following the quiet industrious routine of duty behind the shelter of the abbey walls, heard only the rumours of the strife that raged without; Wulfstan, absorbed in practical, political life, was brought face to face with the anguish and the practical needs of the time. He was already bishop of Worcester, when, in 1002, he was appointed, also, to the see of York. In 1014, he assisted in the compilation of the laws of Aethelred, drawn up at the synod of Eynsham; he died on 28 May 1023. Thus, his period of office coincided with that of the most disastrous and devastating invasions of the country.

It is extremely difficult to determine exactly which of the homilies in the Bodleian[1] are really Wulfstan's. Owing to the superscription at the beginning of the first: *Hic incipiunt sermones Lupi*, all were ascribed to him by Wanley. Napier has pointed out, however, that this heading was, probably, taken from another manuscript of the archbishop's sermons, which were copied into a miscellaneous collection containing many others, of which the authorship is uncertain, or certainly not his. Of the fifty-three homilies in the Bodleian MS, only five are indisputably by Wulfstan. There are the two immediately following the superscription, dealing with the Bible story[2], and with the catholic faith[3]; next follows a sermon[4] of which only parts are by Wulfstan, and which Napier, rejecting the passages he considers unauthentic, has divided into four portions[5]: on the Christian life, on Christ's death, on Christ as the true friend and on the duties of Christians. Then comes the famous *Address to the English*[6], and, last of all, a short exhortation[7] with the superscription *Sermo Lupi*, on the duty of Christians, full of metrical fragments, which can be separated from the context and show signs of sung verse united by alliteration or assonance. Of the remaining homilies, some, which occur in the same order in various manuscripts [illegible]

while others[8] appear also among the *Blickling Homilies* or the

[1] Junius 99. [2] Wanley 1, Napier 2. [3] Wanley 2, Napier 3.
[4] Wanley 4. [5] Napier xix, xx, xxi, xxii. [6] Wanley 5, Napier 33.
[7] Wanley 6, Napier 34. [8] xlix, liv and lv.

undoubtedly the prudery of the age that kept even the author of the *Liber Amoris* from coming to grips with the ideas of Swift's devastating satire.

Forster, Craik, Moriarty, and others studiously avoided any analysis of the *Fragment.* Henry Morley (as did some other editors) left it out completely from one reprinting of the *Tale* and the *Battle of the Books*, though including the spurious 'History of Martin'. Only Churton Collins, in 1893, was willing to call it 'a singularly powerful satire', when discussing 'the cataclysm of filth and vitriol with which the scorn and contempt of Swift overwhelmed' the fanatics. Along with the savage fourth book of *Gulliver* and many of the poems, *The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit* was meat too strong for the stomachs of Victorian readers.

Fortunately the attitude is beginning to change. Modern critics, while rediscovering the merits of Swift's corrosive, naturalistic verse and of the voyage to the land of the Houyhnhnms, have given some serious consideration to the final piece of the *Tale of a Tub* volume. A. C. Guthkelch and D. Nichol Smith have provided a superb annotated edition (1920). Émile Pons in *Swift: les années de jeunesse et le 'Conte du tonneau'* (1925) has discussed many of the basic themes. In an important series of articles, Clarence M. Webster has shown how conventional for his own time were many of Swift's explanations of the physiological origin of enthusiasm and his insistence on the abnormal sex life of the zealots.[1] And finally Ricardo Quintana, in his *Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift* (1936), has commented on the canny artistry of Swift, who perceived how effectively the terminal position of the *Fragment* 'would cope the two great satires preceding it'. But neither Quintana nor any other of the recent commentators on *A Tale of a Tub* has analysed carefully the significance of the order of the pieces in the 1704 volume.

It is not my intention in the present study to investigate the sources of the ideas in *The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*—its obvious relationship to the popular mechanical concept of nature of his day, so ably described by Mr. R. F. Jones in an earlier paper in this volume—the many echoes of Cervantes, Hobbes, Marvell, Henry More, Locke, and others, though such a detailed study might well be rewarding. Instead, I should like

[1] See in particular *P.M.L.A.*, xlviii (Dec. 1933), 1141–53, and l (March 1935), 210–23.

Wulfstan's style is much more vehement than that of Aelfric. He is preacher rather than teacher, appealing more to the emotions than to the reason of his hearers, fertile in concrete illustrations, and avoiding the subtle symbolism in which Aelfric delighted. His sentences, though not deficient in lucidity, are very long; synonym is heaped on synonym and clause upon clause; yet the chanting sense of rhythm is always present; epithets are balanced, and the effect is often heightened by the use of antithesis. But, as might be expected from one whose life was so much absorbed by the administration of public affairs, his style is that of the rhetorician rather than of the philosopher.

In addition to the homilies already mentioned, several isolated tracts of the same nature by unknown authors survive. Among these may be noted the *Life of St Guthlac* and *of St Swithun*, the former translated from the Latin of Felix of Croyland, and, on the ground that one MS[1] is in the same handwriting as Aelfric's Pentateuch[2], often attributed to him; the latter a mere fragment, also supposed by some scholars to be his. There are also the *Life of St Neot*, and *of St Mary of Egypt*, which may, possibly, be his.

Another renowned contemporary of Aelfric was the monk Byrhtferth, whose writings are chiefly concerned with mathematics. He lived about 980, and is said to have been a pupil of Abbo. Leland says he was called Thorneganus. He seems to have known some of Du[illegible] for a time. [illegible] *Handboc* o[illegible]. It begins with a descriptive calendar, and then follow short treatises of a mathematical and philological nature. After these, come three theological tracts, on *The Ages of the World*, *The Loosing of Satan* and *The Seven Sins*. The collection concludes with two homilies, one entitled *Ammonitio Amisi þaet is freondlic mynegung*[4], and the other on the four cardinal virtues. The sermon on the loosing of Satan seems to indicate that it was composed towards the close of the tenth century, and this date is corroborated by what other information we possess about the author[5].

Like Aelfric, Byrhtferth was a product of St Aethelwold's

[1] Cott. Vesp. D. xxi.
[2] Bod. Laud. E 19
[3] Oxf. Ash 328.
[4] reminder.
[5] Besides these English treatises, Byrhtferth was also responsible for Latin commentaries on Bede's *De Temporum Ratione* and *De Natura Rerum* and two essays entitled *De Principiis Mathematicis* and *De Institutione Monachorum*, a *Vita Dunstani* has also been attributed to him.

last section of the book. Other parts, particularly the attacks upon himself and Bentley, may be explained as the result of personal spite and vituperation. But 'even that Excuse will not serve in the *Fragment*, which is levelled at no particular Man that I can find whatsoever'. In this section the real purpose of the work becomes evident: 'the Mask is more plainly taken off in the *Fragment*'.

Much the same attitude toward the profane and degrading imagery of the *Fragment* may be found in other pamphlets of the day when the *Tale of a Tub* volume is mentioned. In *A Morning's Discourse of a Bottomless Tubb, Introducing the Historical Fable of the Oak and Her Three Provinces*, written by 'a Lover of the Loyal, Honest, and Moderate Party', which appeared in 1712, the *Tale of a Tub*, or 'this Romantick Piece', is first called 'frivolous' or rather 'Bottomless', and only bantering references are made to the author's 'Mechanick Method'. Warming to the topic, however, the anonymous writer insists that 'a judicious Scanner' of the book,

> upon a second Reading, will hardly let him scape from a severe Censure, for in Conclusion, as I was saying before, he now turns Cousin *Neptune* in good Earnest, questioning and lessening in his Fragment, the Divinity and Inspiration of the *Apostles* and *Prophets*, and with an Assurance only proper for a Critick of his Kidney, calls it a *Religious Enthusiasm, and a lifting up the Soul and its Faculties above Matter*, then pounding his Opinions together, mixes it with the Devils possessing People, and to crown his Admirable Topick, affirms, *That the Corruption of Sences is the Generation of the Spirit, That Men establish a Fellowship of Christ with Belial, and such is the Analogy between Cloven Tongues and Cloven Feet*: And lastly, to prove a particular Transport in his Prophane Lunacy, affirms, *That a Debate has continued this Hundred Years whether the Deportment and Cant of our* English *Enthusiastick Preachers* was Possession or Inspiration.

Similarly, in the scurrilous parody of Swift, usually assigned to young 'Tom' Burnet, called *Essays Divine, Moral, and Political: By the Author of the Tale of a Tub . . .*, printed in 1714, much of the attack is centred upon these same ideas. The method in this instance is to paraphrase and quote from Swift's works, producing a *pot pourri* of scandalous statements, the cumulative effect of which is much worse than Swift originally intended. After a disagreeable dedication to 'Prince Posterity', in which Swift is personally maligned, there comes Essay I, 'Of

There also exists in six MSS a West Saxon version of the Gospels, which, owing to a note in one MS[1]—*ego Aelfricus scripsi hunc librum in monasterio Baðhonio et dedi Brihtwoldo preposito*—was formerly ascribed to Aelfric of Eynsham. If we suppose this Brihtwold to be the same as the bishop of that name, who held the see of Sherborne from 1006—1046, as he is here called *prepositus*, we may conclude that the Corpus MS was written before 1006. It certainly belongs to the first quarter of the eleventh century and is not of Aelfric's authorship, for it in no wise agrees with his description of his own work on the New Testament. He tells us that he had translated pieces from the New Testament; but this is a full version. The other MSS are later, and one of them, in the Cambridge University Library, contains also the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus*, which provided legendary material for later medieval homilists and for the growth of the Arthurian legend in respect of Joseph of Arimathaea.

The early Christian legends, indeed, and, more particularly, such as mark the continuance of Jewish traditions and the gradual diffusion of Christianity in the east, seem to have had a special attraction for English writers of this period. There are two legends connected with the Holy Rood—one with the growth of its wood, the other with the history of the cross after the crucifixion. The legend of the Holy Rood itself is the same as the original story of Cynewulf's poem. It will be remembered that St Helena was reputed to be of British origin.

The oldest English version of the legend of the growth of the wood is found in a MS in the Bodleian (343), which contains also fifty-one homilies by Aelfric. The manuscript dates only from the twelfth century, but, as the other contents are copies of eleventh century originals, it is reasonable to suppose that the cross legend also was composed at an earlier period. This theory is borne out by the language, which Napier considers too archaic for the twelfth century. From a literary point of view, as well as linguistically, the version is of the greatest interest, as showing the development of English prose. In its original eleventh century form, it represented, perhaps, the best tradition of the literary West Saxon language developed in the cloisters, and the grace and ease of the story show considerable mastery of the art of narrative.

The theme ultimately depends on the Jewish legends contained in the *Book of Adam* and the *Book of Enoch*, and it had originally no connection with Christianity. The story frequently

[1] Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, CXL.

showed clearly his horror over the *Fragment*, in which 'the author has revelled in too licentious a vein of sarcasm: many of his ideas are nauseous, some are indecent, and others have an irreligious tendency'. Orrery found the piece not equal in wit and humour to the rest of the book, but on grounds that to us would seem flimsy.

> I should constantly choose rather to praise, than to arraign, any part of my friend *Swift's* writings: but in those tracts, where he tries to make us uneasy with ourselves, and unhappy in our present existence, *there*, I must yield him up entirely to censure.

When it is remembered that Orrery forced himself to discuss the fourth voyage of Gulliver 'with great reluctance', and was heartily tired and disgusted with it, we need not take his critical opinions very seriously.

It should be evident from these examples that Swift's contemporaries were well aware of the scandalous implications of the ideas in the *Fragment*, and generally not afraid of coming directly to grips with the distasteful themes. Indeed, they seem to have provided much of the subject-matter for the attack.[1] What, then, was Swift's real purpose in placing this combustible material emphatically at the end of his first published work?

Before an attempt is made to answer this question, however, there are other important considerations. How certain are we that the *Fragment* was written by Swift? And can we be sure that he alone was responsible for the placing of the piece where it is in the volume?

For modern scholars (as well as for early readers of the *Tale*) there has been no doubt whatsoever of Swift's sole authorship of the *Fragment*. Indeed, the claim in Curll's *Complete Key to the Tale of a Tub* in 1710 that not Jonathan, but his cousin Thomas Swift was responsible for *The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit* and the main allegory of the *Tale* has been so clearly discredited by Guthkelch and Nichol Smith in their edition that there is no need to go over the evidence again. Nor can there be any real doubt that the printing of the piece was exactly as Swift wished. Despite all his typical attempts at mystification—

[1] It may not be far-fetched also to see oblique hits at the themes of the *Tale of a Tub* volume in Defoe's railing against blasphemous anonymous pamphlets in the *Review* for 8 Nov. 1705. Other later attacks which may be mentioned appeared in the *Medley* (1710–12) and in *Gulliveriana* (1728), pp. xix, 6–7, &c.

Of the legends printed by Cockayne, that of Jamnes and Mambres has quite a modern "psychical" flavour. The fact of its being a mere fragment, and breaking off when just about to become dull, saves it in the eyes of all lovers of ghost-tales.

In addition to other legends of a sacred character there are others of a more worldly nature, the most remarkable being the (suppositious) *Letter from Alexander to Aristotle*[1], *The Wonders of the East*[2] and the story of *Apollonius of Tyre*[3]. The first two are closely connected with the eastern legend of Alexander the Great, which had taken shape before the Christian era in a work known as the *pseudo-Kallisthenes*, which was translated into Latin before 340 by the so-called Julius Valerius. The two Alexander legends, as we have them, are very faithful translations from Latin originals, each chapter of *The Wonders of the East* being preceded by a copy of the text on which it is founded. They are important in the history of literature as proving the interest taken by the educated clergy of the eleventh century in the Latin legend cycles. Rather later than these two works, and also of eastern origin, is the Old English version of *Apollonius of Tyre*, of which only half is extant, a version of the same theme as that treated in the 153rd chapter of *Gesta Romanorum*. It tells of the wooing of the king of Antioch's daughter by Apollonius of Tyre, and how her father, to prevent her marriage, required her suitors to solve a riddle or to be beheaded. The early appearance of this legend in the vernacular is especially interesting, since Gower's version of the story in his *Confessio Amantis* provided the theme for *Pericles of Tyre*. The presence of these legends in Old English is peculiarly significant as indicating the on-coming flood of foreign literature. Hitherto, the priest had been the story-teller, after the heroic minstrelsy of earlier days had passed away; henceforth, the lighter touch of the deliberate tale-teller was to be heard in English.

From these we must turn to consider the quasi-scientific works of this period, which have all been printed by Cockayne in his *Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft in Early England*. As might be expected, they have little literary value, but are extremely interesting from a historical standpoint, since they throw many valuable side-lights on the manners and social conditions of the time. Cockayne's collection begins with the *Herbarium* that passes under the name of Apuleius, a work

[1] MS. Vitell. A. xv. [2] Cott. Tib. B. v. [3] C.C.C.C. S. 18.

embodied later in his larger satire.[1] Hone and Rossi (1934) advance the hypothesis that the *Fragment* merely completed the religious irony 'by criticising another type of dissenters who could not very well be fitted into the scheme of the *Tale*'. Herbert Davis in his recent edition offers the interesting suggestion that the piece 'might very well have been a part of one of the "Treatises speedily to be published," announced at the beginning of the book—*An Analytical Discourse upon Zeal, Histori-theo-physi-logically considered*', but volunteers no guess concerning the probable date of composition. Guthkelch and Nichol Smith, on the other hand, explicitly place it later than the *Battle*—in the same period as the later sections of the *Tale*. 'It is the product of the same mind, and in the same phase, that gave us the greater but not stronger "Digression concerning Madness" and the section on the Aeolists.' To this Quintana and Clarence M. Webster agree, the latter calling it 'one of the most brilliant and revelatory of his works, one never surpassed by him for unmistakable statement that Man was carnal'.[2] Despite Pons and others to the contrary, there are many who feel that the style and wit of the *Fragment* are fully as brilliant and powerful as of the passages in the *Tale* traditionally more admired.

But why should Swift concoct this bewildering *Fragment* after the main portion of his work had been completed? Webster, in the article just quoted, suggests that in the *Tale* proper Swift was not ready to be definite and explicit about the causes of enthusiasm and reserved that analysis for the final 'Discourse'. But may not the decision have been solely the result of Swift's artistic sense of climax? What would appear to be at least a tenable supposition is that once all the maze of preliminary matter and digressions had been interwoven with the religious allegory, the original 'The Conclusion' appeared to Swift too weak, and the *Fragment* was designed as the shocking end to the volume. Or it may be that at this time 'The Conclusion' was specifically revised to make it inconclusive, so that it would act merely as a transition to the *Battle* and the final stinging *Fragment*.

Although exact dates of composition for the various sections of the *Tale* are difficult to ascertain, it is generally accepted that

[1] Being published by the Princeton University Press.
[2] *P.M.L.A.*, xlviii (Dec. 1933), 1152.

already begun to deteriorate, and was being gradually replaced by the sung metre of the popular ballad. For the whole of our period we have only two great poems, the fragment of *Judith* in the Beowulf MS and the East Anglian poem of Byrhtnoth's death at Maldon. Both poems deal with the struggle against the same foe and both are in the alliterative rhetorical metre. *Judith* contains a fair number of lines which are undoubtedly clear types of sung verse, such as is found in the thirteenth century in Layamon's *Brut. The Battle of Maldon* also contains two much alike[1]. The adoption of this metre, which, although ancient, here exhibits what are practically its first known traces in Old English literature, is carried to much greater lengths in the poems embedded in the *Chronicle*; and some observations upon this new metre, called the "sung" or four-beat verse, as opposed to the declamatory or two-beat metre of the older poems, will be found in an appendix at the end of the volume.

The first poem in the *Chronicle* occurs under the year 937, and celebrates the glorious victory won by Aethelstan at Brunanburh. It is a markedly patriotic poem and shows deep feeling; its brilliant lyrical power, and the national enthusiasm evident throughout, have made it familiar, in one form or another, to all lovers of English verse. Great care was taken with the metre, which is the ancient rhetorical line.

Under the year 942 another poem in alliterative rhetorical metre occurs. It consists only of a few lines, and its subject is the liberation of the five boroughs, Leicester, Lincoln, Nottingham, Stamford and Derby, "which were formerly Danish, constrained by need in the captive bonds of the heathen," by Edmund, son of Edward the Elder. It has little poetic value; but it is distinguished by the same intense patriotism as the verses on the battle of Brunanburh.

The first poem in sung verse contained in the *Chronicle* is that for 959, on the accession of king Edgar. It contains forty-nine half lines, making twenty-four and a half full lines, connected, of which only about eight show alliteration. The lines are connected in the earlier form of rimeless rhythm, not strictly alliterative, though

[1] But the reader must be cautioned against assuming that every rimed verse was also sung verse. The shorter types of rimed verse in such poems as *Judith* and *The Battle of Maldon* were almost certainly not. The only sure criteria are (1) conformity to the metrical schemes given in the Appendix, (2) a tendency to neglect the rhetoric stress and turn the two-beat rhythm into a four-beat, as shown by the riming use of syllables not carrying the full stress. Examples are. *Judith*, l. 231, (*ecgum gecoste*) *slōgon eornoste*; *Maldon*, l. 309, Byrhtwold *maþelode* bórd hăfĕnŏdĕ.

Miriam Starkman has recently pointed out,[1] than has been hitherto supposed. To list all the verbal connexions, the hidden allusions which subtly lead the reader back and forth from one theme to the other, until they almost fuse in the later sections (VIII to XI) would require too much space. Even near the end, if we stretch a point and consider Section X, called by Hawkesworth 'A Further Digression', as a unit with Section IX, the back-and-forth parallel structure is maintained up to 'The Conclusion', which ironically purports to end the work.

But for readers of the 1704 volume this did not end the discourse; if their interest had not flagged they were carried back-and-forth once more—to the literary quarrels of the Ancients and the Moderns, in the *Battle of the Books*, and back again to religious fanaticism in the final *Fragment*. Thus even after the *Tale* was ostensibly over, Swift provided one last bit of parallelism between the absurdities of learning and of religious enthusiasm. And while it is true that there is much evidence to support the belief that Swift was just as deeply aroused (if not more so) by the corruptions in literature as by those in the Church, the fact remains that he chose to end the volume on the religious theme.

That Swift thought of the *Fragment* as an integral part of the work is shown conclusively by the list of 'Treatises writ by the same Author, most of them mentioned in the following Discourses; which will be speedily published', which faced the title-page in the first four editions. Almost all of these eleven 'treatises' are directly referred to at various points in the book, the first eight in the *Tale* proper, and the last, 'A Critical Essay upon the Art of Canting, Philosophically, Physically, and Musically considered', in the *Fragment*. The titles are sprinkled throughout the pages, like mysterious clues in a treasure-hunt. If there is any cabalistic significance in the order of the treatises and the sections in which they appear, no one yet has found it out. But they do serve to hold the whole work together more compactly; and to bind the *Fragment* securely to the *Tale* with a long cord of allusion.

The innocuous 'The Conclusion' which ostensibly brings the *Tale* proper to an end is playfully arch in 'the Modern Way', with witty sallies over the Bookseller, the 'Profound Writers' of his day, the author's 'short Fits or Intervals of Dullness', the

[1] See p. 142, n. 1.

afterwards. They are exactly like the irregular lines on Edgar's death. Probably the chronicler took a popular ballad or ballads, broke it up, and attempted to destroy its sing-song character by the addition of end verses. This, and the strophic character of the original or originals, would account for its metrical variety and uncertainty. In several places we meet with half line tags, generally trimetric, once certainly in full tetrameter. The poem declares that no worse deed than the murder of Edward had ever been committed among the English since the invasion of Britain; men murdered him, but God glorified him; and he who was before an earthly king is now, after death, a heavenly saint. His earthly kinsmen would not avenge him, but his heavenly Father has avenged him amply, and they who would not bow to him living now bend humbly on their knees to his dead bones. Thus, we may perceive that *men's plans are as naught before God's.* The words, "Men murdered him, but God glorified him," are alliterative, and seem like a refrain; and the whole poem is, metrically, one of the most interesting of the series.

There is a long interval before the next verses, which tell of the siege of Canterbury, and the capture of archbishop Aelfhēah (Alphege) in 1011. They consist of twelve half lines of sung verse, and are, evidently, a quotation from some ballad commemorating these disasters. They lament the imprisonment of him who was erstwhile head of Christendom and England, and the misery that men might now behold in the unhappy city whence first came the joys of Christianity. There are some difficulties in scansion, and the variant readings in certain MSS[1], though they can be restored to something like proper metrical harmony, show what mishandling these songs underwent when written down by the scribes.

The metre of the next poem is much better preserved. It is of the same Layamon sung verse type, but shows a regular union of each two half lines by rime and assonance. Where this fails, we can at once suspect that the scribe has tampered with the original version. Some assonances can only be south-eastern. Its subject is the capture and cruel fate of the aetheling Alfred, and it shows a strong spirit of partisanship against Godwin. This is led up to by the prose account telling how Alfred came to Winchester to see his mother, but was hindered and captured by Godwin. The poem relates how Godwin scattered Alfred's followers, killing some and imprisoning others, and how the aetheling was led

[1] Cott. Tib. B. iv, and Bodl. Laud. 636.

himself seduced by his *lower Parts* into a *Ditch*'. With all th brutality and obsession with sex of Sinclair Lewis's *Elme Gantry*, the piece is a forerunner of twentieth-century dissection of human nature. And a more up-to-the-minute exposé i would be hard to find. As W. D. Taylor points out, 'Jac Leyden followed about by a community of women' finds hi counterpart in twentieth-century life itself. And 'As to th flesh playing leap-frog with the spirit', where can we find i 'better exemplified than in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*?'[1]

There is no evidence that Swift considered this theme mor important than his violent attacks on false learning. But h may have thought that a final exposure of the sectaries woul make the most indelible impression on his readers. And th reactions of Wotton, Burnet, and others of his contemporaries show that this is exactly what happened. Though not completel grasping Swift's plan, they nevertheless sensed that in th *Fragment* might be found the kernel of his most horrifying ideas. Cleverly hidden as it is by the apparent Gothic wildness o design, Swift's keen sense of climax had thus led his reader from one knife-thrust to another, up to the last devastatin shock. Is it, then, too far-fetched to suggest that the *Discours Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit* was meant to b the true ending of the whole complex system which we thin of as *A Tale of a Tub*?

[1] *Jonathan Swift, a Critical Essay* (London, 1933), pp. 64–5.

interest. We have, likewise, some fragments on the marriage of earl Ralph of Norwich, the first couplet of which

> þaer waes þaet bryd ealo
> þaet waes manegra manna bealo,

shows, unmistakably, its ballad origin.

The last verses of this class are those on the reign of William the Conqueror. Earle arranged some twelve lines as poetry, but the whole passage claims similar treatment, since, in the portion which he has printed as prose, there occur examples of full rime and also of full assonance, connecting the half lines in the passages he has not so written. The whole passage seems to be derived from at least two ballads against the Norman conqueror. The first begins "He rixade ôfer Ênglaelând" and tells of the king's intimate acquaintance with his dominions, so that he knew the owner of every hide of land and how much it was worth; then, how he conquered Wales and Scotland and, if he had lived two years longer, would have won Ireland, also, without weapon strife. This, which is unrimed, is followed by the passage "Cástelas hè lèt wýrceân," which is invaluable because of its strong Kentish assonances. These lines tell, in bitter words, of the king's oppression, of his heavy taxation, and of the terrible game laws, drawn up to preserve those "tall deer" which he loved as greatly as though he were their father. This last part is 38 lines long, divided into 19 couplets linked by rime or assonance, the nineteenth being either marred in transcription or a monastic addition in rime. The spelling often hides the dialectical completeness of the assonance. After this sung ballad follows a passage of rhythmical prose, in which the compiler states that he has written these things about the king, both good and evil, that men may imitate the goodness and wholly flee from the evil. It would seem that the chronicler had to be original in telling of the Conqueror's virtues; but, for the vices, he had plenty of popular material at hand. The unhappy people were *in no mood to exalt his virtues, and, for the description of these,* the chronicler was forced to rely on his own literary resources.

The verses in the *Chronicle* have little literary merit, with the exception of the poem on the battle of Brunanburh, and this seems to have been strongly influenced by the epic of *Judith*. Of this latter, unfortunately, only a beautiful fragment, consisting of some 350 lines, survives[1]. *Judith* was, perhaps, composed as a eulogy of Aethelflaed, queen of Mercia, who fought nobly against

[1] Cott. Vitell. xv

copying it out, reading it over, and practising how it should be spoken, before finally delivering it from the pulpit.

The method he recommends was one which had been successfully used by

a Clergyman of some Distinction, who appeared to deliver his Sermon without looking into his Notes; which, when I complimented him upon, he assured me, he could not repeat six Lines; but his Method was to write the whole Sermon in a large plain Hand, with all the Forms of Margin, Paragraph, marked Page, and the like; then on *Sunday* Morning, he took care to run it over five or six Times, which he could do in an Hour; and when he delivered it, by pretending to turn his Face from one Side to the other, he would (in his own Expression) pick up the Lines, and cheat his People, by making them believe he had it all by Heart. He farther added, that whenever he happened, by Neglect, to omit any of these Circumstances, the Vogue of the *Parish* was, *our Doctor gave us but an indifferent Sermon to-day*. Now among us, many Clergymen act so directly contrary to this Method; that from a Habit of saving *Time* and *Paper*, which they acquired at the University, they write in so diminutive a Manner, with such frequent Blots and Interlineations, that they are hardly able to go on without perpetual Hesitations, or extemporary Expletives: And I desire to know what can be more inexcusable than to see a Divine, and a Scholar, at a Loss in reading his own Compositions; which, it is supposed, he hath been preparing with much *Pains* and *Thought*, for the Instruction of his People.

. . . .

Let me entreat you therefore, to add one Half-Crown a Year to the Article of *Paper*; to transcribe your Sermons in as large and plain a manner as you can, and either make no Interlineations, or change the whole Leaf: For we, your Hearers, would rather you should be less correct, than perpetually stammering; which I take to be one of the worst *Solecisms* in *Rhetorick*. And lastly, read your Sermon once or twice, for a few Days before you preach it: To which you will probably answer some Years hence, *That it was but just finished when the last Bell rang to Church*; and I shall readily believe, but not excuse you.

A careful examination of Swift's manuscript proves that he himself carried out every step in the procedure he recommended.

The sermon itself is written in a large, formal hand on ten quarto leaves, each page carefully numbered at the top right-hand corner from 1 to 20; and at the top of the first page he began by putting down the date when he started to write it,

the entire overthrow of the Assyrians, the return of the conquerors with their booty to Bethulia, and Judith's praise of the Almighty for the triumph of her stratagem.

From this sketch of the poem it will be seen that it is closely allied in theme to those of Cynewulf and his school, and this led to the assumption of Ten Brink and others that it was composed in the early part of the ninth century. A close investigation of its diction by Gregory Foster led him to place it a century later; and, if, as he thinks, it was composed to commemorate the valiant deeds of Aethelflaed, the Lady of Mercia, who wrested the five boroughs from the Danes, it was probably written about 918. But nothing can be said with certainty on the subject.

As poetry, this fragment stands in the front rank of Old English literature, with *Beowulf* and *Elene* and *Andreas*. In wealth of synonym it is equal to the best poems of Cynewulf, while the construction of the sentences is simpler, and the narrative, in consequence, less obscure. An impression of intensity is produced by the heaping of synonyms in moments of stress, as in the prayer of Judith, and in the fierce lines which describe the onset against the Assyrians; while a sense of dramatic fitness is shown in the transitions, the divisions of the cantos and the preparation for each great adventure. The tragedy is alive, and the actors play their parts before our eyes.

The patriotic feeling which probably gave rise to *Judith* was certainly responsible for the second great poem of our period, the *Battle of Maldon*, sometimes called *Byrhtnoth's Death*. The manuscript of this poem[1] was destroyed by the Cottonian fire; but it had, fortunately, been printed by Hearne in 1726, and it is from his text that our knowledge of the poem is derived. It celebrates the death of the great ealdorman Byrhtnoth, who was connected by close ties of kinship with Aethelmaer, the friend of Aelfric; it was, indeed, partly by means of legacies left by him that Aethelmaer was enabled to support so generously the monastic revival, and it is, therefore, fitting that he should be commemorated by one of the finest poems in Old English. In the poem before us he stands out as the ideal leader of men, admirable alike in his devotion to his king, his simple piety and his sense of responsibility towards his followers. He died as became a member of the race that thirsts for danger[2], almost the last of the warriors of that time who maintained the noble tradition of the days of

[1] Oth. A. xii.

[2] Tacitus, *Hist.* v, 19.

This provides him with a perfect foundation for the foursquare compact structure of the whole sentence which states the immediate effects of Christianity and the unfolding of those effects throughout history.

> The primitive Christians accepted the Legacy,
> and their Successors [*instead of the word that had first suggested itself to him* 'followers']
> down to the present Age have been largely full-
> filling his Prophesy.

The weight of such a sentence, however, at the end of what is only an introductory paragraph to be followed by a very simple statement of the theme of the discourse, offers a considerable problem. How is he to return to the direct homiletic style, the main purpose of the preacher as Swift conceived it, namely, to tell his hearers what is their duty? And we see him struggling with the opening of the following sentence, or possibly coming back to it again and finding it awkwardly fitted on to what had preceded it and requiring alteration. He had first written a sentence which is weak and redundant:

> However the Duty still remains in force, and
> there is none more incumbent upon Christians
> than that of brotherly Love.

He changes the first phrase so that it fits in firmly with the preceding statement and still keeps before us the two contrasted standards of the general practice of mankind and of the Christian profession, changing the weak 'however' into

> But whatever the practice of mankind hath been
> there is no Duty more incumbent upon those who
> profess the Gospel.

And finally he inserts after 'hath been' a further addition, a characteristic Swiftian emphasis and completeness, the phrase 'or still continues'.

Most of the pages that follow are so free from alterations and corrections that they might almost seem to be fair copies from an earlier draft. And it may be of course that Swift himself put into practice what he recommended and changed the whole leaf if it had become too much defaced by corrections or interlineations. Nevertheless on several of these pages there remain

up by Offa and Dunnere; and the warriors advanced to a fresh attack. The appearance amongst the defending ranks of Aeschere, son of Ecglaf, a Northumbrian hostage, is of great interest, as it seems, for a moment, to give us a vivid glance of the political troubles of the land. The poem ends by telling how Godric exhorted his comrades and fought fiercely against the heathen till he, too, fell.

This brief outline may, perhaps, give some idea of the great interest of the poem, whose every word is filled with deep hatred against the marauding foe, and with dignified sorrow for the loss of beloved friends. The verse is as noble as the deed and instinct with dramatic life. In it we see the heroic feeling of the earlier national poetry, full of the Teutonic theme of loyal friendship and warlike courage. And not until many hundreds of years have elapsed do we find its equal in tragic strength. It is from this stirring narrative, from Wulfstan's address to the English and from the bitter records in the *Chronicle*, that we realise the degradation of the country during the unhappy reign of Aethelred.

The remaining poems of our period in the old alliterative metre are of a didactic character. Among them may be mentioned the *Menologium* or poetical calendar, which is prefixed to a version of the *Chronicle*[1]. It is an interesting metrical survey of the progress of the year, with special mention of the saints' days observed by the church, preserving some of the Old English names of the months, such as Weodmonað (August), Winterfylleð (October) and Blōtmonað (November), and retaining traces of heathen times, though the whole is Christian in basis. Its value, as poetry, depends on the tender feeling for nature shown in such passages as those which describe the coming of May, tranquil and gentle, with blossoming woods and flowers, or winter, which cuts off the harvest with the sword of rime and snow, when all is fettered with frost by the hest of the Creator, so that men may no longer haunt the green meadows or the flowery fields.

Of more literary value is the poem entitled *Be Domes Daege*[2], a free version of the Latin poem *De Die Judicii*, by some scholars ascribed to Bede and by others to Alcuin. The 157 lines of the Latin original are expanded to 304 by the translator, whose imaginative gift is especially visible in the way he enlarges on a hint from his source. The opening passage is extremely beautiful.

[1] Cott. Tib. B. I.

[2] Found in a unique manuscript in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

> think it necessary to put a Force upon their own Tempers, by acting a noisy, violent, malicious Part, as a Means to be distinguished.

We have seen that Swift not only wrote in the date 29 November, at the foot of the last page of the sermon, but also wrote again on the verso of the first blank leaf, 'Finisht Nov[br] 29, 1717'; we may assume therefore that the revisions and corrections had all been made two days before the sermon was to be delivered. He had then still plenty of time to follow the procedure that he recommends and read it over once or twice to become familiar with it before preaching it. And here again we find in the manuscript actual proof that he did take the trouble to do this and that he read it through with the intonations of the words in his ears as he intended to speak it. For on several pages of the manuscript he has accentuated with a broad sloping penstroke certain words which he evidently wished to be spoken with ironical emphasis, and this mark is again repeated in later passages when he reiterates the characteristics of a really moderate churchman. For example:

> But the most modèrate and favòred Divines dare not own, that the word Modèration with respect to the Dissenters can be at all applyed to their Relìgion, but is purely Persònall and Prudèntiall.

or again:

> to preach Modèration to the first, and Patìence to the other, would perhaps be to little purpose.

It is impossible to study the pages of this manuscript without realizing that Swift did not think lightly of his duty to preach at St. Patrick's, whatever remarks he may sometimes have made about his sermons. For we get a glimpse of him here actually at work taking great pains not only to prepare a discourse which in the clarity and force of its argument and in the simplicity of its style should be fitted to the needs of his congregation, but also to study and perfect his delivery of it in such a manner as best to edify his hearers.

Some of his friends, indeed, at the time of the eclipse they had all suffered after the death of Queen Anne, had been inclined

up by Offa and Dunnere; and the warriors advanced to a fresh attack. The appearance amongst the defending ranks of Aeschere, son of Ecglaf, a Northumbrian hostage, is of great interest, as it seems, for a moment, to give us a vivid glance of the political troubles of the land. The poem ends by telling how Godric exhorted his comrades and fought fiercely against the heathen till he, too, fell.

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[1] Cott. Tib. B. I.

[2] Found in a unique manuscript in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

the concluding paragraph which is crowded into the space at the foot of the last page as though it had been an afterthought:

> I have now done with my Text, which I confess to have treated in a manner more suited to the present Times, than to the Nature of the Subject in generall.

He then proceeds to excuse himself for this very neatly by quoting the Apostle to the Thessalonians,

> As touching Brotherly Love ye need not that I write unto you for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

And finally he commits them to the mercy of God, who can alone restore and continue among them this gift of charity which is 'the very Bond of Peace and of all Virtues'. Swift does not hide his scepticism even in the pulpit. Indeed it is this which gives such strength to his sermons and it is this which keeps them fresh. He knows that God alone can implant in the heart of man the real virtue of Christian charity, but the Dean of St. Patrick's can at least use his pulpit to warn those under his care to beware of party hatred, malice, and uncharitableness even towards their Teacher. It is true that he speaks with his usual vehemence about 'the Insolence of the Dissenters as a principal Cause of all that Hatred and Animosity now reigning among us'. But he has always a more positive purpose than to express his own feelings. He is concerned as a preacher to address himself directly to the actual congregation sitting before him in St. Patrick's. His aim is to influence them at that time in a manner which he frankly admits is political. Though they have the advantage of belonging generally to 'the middle and the lower sort of people', where what little religion there is in the world chiefly resides, they are in danger of being made use of by political leaders for their own purpose. They are even led to suspect him and 'call him by a Name which they tell you signifyes some very bad Thing'. It is his duty to make clear to them that they are not properly concerned in the quarrels of political parties and that they might well live amicably together. With their interests as tradesmen, there is no reason why their personal friendships or their religion should be affected by party considerations. And so he will set before them what he regards as the marks of a really *moderate* Churchman, which are no other than those he had formerly proclaimed as an

of saints in these verses shows that it was not by the author of *Be Domes Daege* is, however, scarcely sound, for it disregards contemporary theology and overlooks the English verses in praise of the Virgin added by the translator of that poem. Hence our truest warrant for attributing these verses to a different author lies rather in the beauty and dignity of *Be Domes Daege*. The hymn in question is an ingenious piece of trickery, like many a Provençal poem of later date. It opens with a prayer for God's mercy on the reader, and then goes on to speak of the incarnation, ending with an invocation to Mary and the saints. These verses, however, are of inestimable value metrically, since they show, by their Latin equivalents, the two-beat character of the rhetorical verse, just as similar Old German poems show, by their far greater length in the Latin portions, the four-beat character of Germanic sung verse.

More interesting are the eleventh century metrical versions of the *Psalms*, in a manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale. This MS contains only *Psalms* l to cl, but Bouterwek discovered further fragments in a Benedictine office, which partly fill up the gaps, and point to the existence of a complete metrical version of the *Psalter* in Old English. Taken altogether, however, this Benedictine office is merely a heap of fragments. The translation is, as a rule, good, when play is given to love of nature or to feelings common in Old English poetry. An isolated version exists of *Psalm* l in Kentish dialect[1], which was formerly supposed to belong to the eighth century, but which is shown, by its language, to be two hundred years later. It was not, apparently, one of a series, but was complete in itself, being rounded off at the close by a short hymn-like passage on David's sin and his atonement.

A gloomy poem on *The Grave*, "For thee was a house built Ere thou wast born," etc., written in the margin of a volume of homilies in the Bodleian[2] and known to all readers of Longfellow and many beside, need not detain us long. It is, probably, of later date than any of the poems already referred to and shows signs of the coming metrical change.

Last, there must be mentioned a poem on the city of Durham, which, though not composed within our period, is the latest in the classical rhetorical metre that is known to exist, and is, therefore, most suitably described in this place. One version[3] was printed by Hickes in his *Thesaurus* (1703—5), and another copy

[1] Cott. Vesp. D v 1.

[2] NE. F. 4, 12.

[3] Cott. Vit. D. 20

from this original manuscript which was then to be seen in George Faulkner's shop in Dublin. Swift had died nine years before and there can be no question of an editor's correcting or revising proofs. Therefore by comparing the printed text with the manuscript we can find out exactly what happened to an author's text when it was being prepared for publication by George Faulkner in Dublin in 1754.

The autograph manuscript was certainly not used by the printer, as it bears no sign of having been touched in any way after it had been completed by Swift. A copy must therefore have been made from it, and it is probable that in this copy Swift's spelling and capitalization were already normalized and possibly some changes made in the punctuation. The copyist may also have been responsible for certain changes in word order in passages where interlinear additions have been made. One or two minor errors may also have been introduced by the copyist, but the final changes as they appear in the printed version, whether due to the copyist or to the compositor, may be taken as indicating the regular printer's usage.

These changes are as follows:

Such abbreviations as occur, rarely indeed in the manuscript, are printed in full. Swift's peculiarities of spelling are normalized throughout: his use of the plural form '—yes', e.g. *Enemyes*, *Partyes*, *Bodyes*; and of '—y' in endings such as *signifyes*, *qualifyed*; his doubling of the final consonant in words like *naturall*, *generall*, *criminall*, *robb*, *sett*; his preference for 'or' in such words as *favor*, *neighbor*; his elimination of the 'e' in *destroyd*, *falsly*, *wondred*, *immediat*; and on the other hand his consistent use of *onely*, *extream*, *acknoledged*.

The printer has also attempted to normalize Swift's rather inconsistent capitalization. These practices had been followed in the early volumes of Faulkner's collected edition, which had begun to appear in 1735, when Swift himself was certainly given the opportunity of correcting the sheets. And there are two other practices which we know that Swift was in part responsible for: namely, the insistence on preserving the already old-fashioned ending '—eth', and the use of a heavier and more formal system of punctuation than he was ever accustomed to introduce into his manuscripts. But I doubt whether Swift would have approved the printer's tendency to use the ending '—eth' at every possible opportunity, which has led him to

CHAPTER VIII

THE NORMAN CONQUEST

The Norman conquest of England, from a literary point of view, did not begin on the autumn day that saw Harold's levies defeated by Norman archers on the slopes of Senlac. It began with the years which, from his early youth onwards, Edward the Confessor, the grandson of a Norman duke, had spent in exile in Normandy; and with his intimacy with "foreigners" and its inevitable consequences. The invasion of Norman favourites, which preceded and accompanied his accession to the throne, and their appointment, for a time, to the chief places in church and state, led to the tightening of the bonds that bound England to the Roman church, and paved the way for the period of Latin influence that followed the coming of William, Lanfranc and Anselm.

The development of the old vernacular literature was arrested for nearly a hundred and fifty years after Hastings; and, as the preservation of letters depended on ecclesiastics, professed scholars and monastic chroniclers of foreign extraction, the literature of England for practically a couple of centuries is to be found mainly in Latin. Happily for England, her connection with the continent became intimate at a time when Paris, "the mother of wisdom," was about to rise to intellectual dominance over Europe.

Of the national vernacular literature of France, at the time of the Conquest, little was transplanted to English soil; but, in the two centuries that followed, the cultivation of romance, aided by "matter" that had passed through Celtic hands, flourished exceedingly among the Anglo-Norman peoples and became a notable part of English literature.

The development of Old English literature, as we have said, was arrested. It was by no means, as some have urged, lifeless before this break in its history; and speculation would be futile as to what might have been its future, had there been no Norman conquest. Where so much has been lost, there is no safety in

possible. For, when he reprinted the sermon in 1762 in the tenth volume of the *Collected Works*, the text was entirely reset, and though two other errors were then introduced, all these misprints were corrected.

We should have expected the printer to use for his copy-text the edition of 1754; but I have not found a copy in which these errors had been corrected, nor have I seen one with a list of Errata. Faulkner, however, had advertised that 'if there should be any Errors in (his volumes) he will be glad to be set right, and will with Pleasure, print an Errata for that Purpose, to render this Edition as correct as possible'. And it may well be that after his 1754 text appeared, someone had taken the trouble to compare a copy with the manuscript then in his shop, and to correct those errors in it.

At any rate the fact that they were corrected when the sermon was reprinted in Volume X of the *Works* proves that Faulkner continued to be concerned that these later volumes also should be as correct as possible. Thus once more when we are able to verify and check his reliability, we find that his claim that the Dublin edition has greater authority than those printed in London is fully justified. And we must admit that 'he hath some Degree of Merit with the Publick by the Publication of these Works, which would never have been collected together, had he not been favoured with the Author's Friendship and Intimacy'.

or no assistance at first from the alien lettered classes; and, when it revived, it was "with a difference."

There had not been wanting signs of some coming change. Already, in pre-Conquest days, there had been a tendency to seek some "new thing." A growing sense of the existence of wonderful things in the east, of which it was desirable to have some knowledge, had led an unknown Englishman to translate the story of *Apollonius of Tyre* into English. The marvellous deeds of the *Lives of the Saints* had already proved that a taste for listening to stories, if not, as yet, the capacity to tell them with conscious literary art, grace and skill, was in existence. And, in addition to this, we learn from the list of books acquired by Leofric for Exeter cathedral, sixteen years only before the battle of Hastings, that the love for books and learning which had inspired Benedict Biscop and Dunstan had by no means died out; of some sixty volumes, many were in English and one is the famous "mycel Englisc boc" "of many kinds of things wrought in verse," from which we know much of the little we do know concerning Old English literature.

The facility with which Englishmen adopted what Normans had to give was, in some measure, due to the blood-relationship that already existed between the two races. Scandinavian seafarers, mated with women of Gaul, had bred a race possessing certain features akin to those of the Teutonic inhabitants of England. It was a race that, becoming "French," adapted itself rapidly to its new surroundings, soon forgetting its northern home and tongue; and, when it was master of England, further barriers between race and race were soon broken down. The Norman conquest of England differed altogether from the English conquest of Britain. The earlier conquest was a process of colonisation and gave the land an almost entirely new population, with entirely new thoughts and ways of looking at things, save in the borderlands of the "Celtic fringe"; the later brought a new governing, and then a new trading, class, and added a fresh strain to the national blood without supplanting the mass of the people. Intermarriage, that would begin, naturally enough, among Norman serving-men and English women, spread from rank to rank, receiving its ultimate sanction when Anselm crowned Matilda as Henry's queen. Sooner or later the Norman, whether of higher or of lower degree, adopted England as his country, spoke and acted as an Englishman and, before the Great Charter, that is to say, a hundred and fifty years after the battle of Hastings, when the French homes of

possess a life-long comfortable income.[1] It is true that he had financial difficulties of a certain kind, but there was only one serious threat to his fortune. This occurred in 1725 when John Pratt, Deputy Vice-Treasurer of Ireland, who had £1,200 belonging to Swift in his possession, was imprisoned for defalcations amounting to over £70,000. Fortunately Pratt proved a man of honour, and Swift 'miraculously escaped being perfectly worth nothing'.[2] What touched Swift more were the vexatious delays in rents and interests, and particularly the reduced return from tithes. Doubtless these occasioned momentary pinches and account for his troubled words—for example, the reiterated statement between 1733 and 1735 that his income had been reduced by £300.[3] Yet his prophecies of ruin are belied by the steady accumulation of that sizeable fortune remaining at his death to endow his hospital. The fact is, that with respect to his income, as elsewhere, Swift writes more darkly than the situation warrants, indulging himself—surely half seriously—in remarkably obvious distortion of the realities. It is probable that he did not expect to be taken literally. Nor is it likely that his friends were perturbed: report had it that the deanery made a good return. Nevertheless it is not possible to speak with any finality concerning Swift's financial affairs: they have never received careful investigation, not even the easily available documents, such as the account books. Though doubtless many revealing documents are lost beyond recovery, I have recently found a manuscript which sheds light on the exact return from the deanery. This document, which has escaped the notice of modern scholars, offers further testimony that Swift's income was ample. It is an undated and unsigned manuscript among the records in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, inscribed 'Of D^r Swift's Effects'; and it sets forth item by item the sources—rents, tithes, and fees—from which Swift's

[1] Shortly after his appointment he writes to Stella of the heavy initial expenses for the deanery house, the First Fruits, and the Patent, amounting to £1,000 (cf. *Journal to Stella*, 23 April 1713), but a year later, in a letter written to Archdeacon Walls, filled with calculations, he is obviously feeling secure financially. See *Corres.* ii. 147.

[2] Swift wrote to Ford that Pratt 'owed me all and something more than all I had in the World'. He was proud of the resignation he displayed in the face of this great loss: 'I despaired of every Penny, and yet I have legall Witness that I was a great Philosopher in that Matter.' See *Letters of Swift to Ford*, ed. David Nichol Smith, pp. 121, 125; *Corres.* iii. 241, 251, 252.

[3] Ibid. v. 107, 163, 223.

connection with the wisdom of the east. It is not to be forgotten, for instance, that, for three or four hundred years, that is to say, from about the ninth to about the twelfth century, Mohammadanism, under the rule of enlightened caliphs in the east and in the west, fostered learning and promoted the study of the liberal arts at a time when many of the Christian kingdoms of Europe were in intellectual darkness. Harun ar-Rashid was a contemporary of Alcuin, and he and his successors made Baghdad and the cities of Spain centres of knowledge and storehouses of books. The Aristotelian philosophy, which had a commanding influence over the whole of the religious thought of the west during the Middle Ages, was known, prior to the middle of the thirteenth century, chiefly through Latin translations based upon Arabic versions of Aristotle; and the attachment of the Arabs to the study of mathematics and astronomy is too well known to call for comment. Our own connection with Mohammadan learning during the period of its European predominance is exemplified in the persons of Michael Scot; of Robert the Englishman or Robert de Retines, who first translated the Coran into Latin; of Daniel of Morley, East Anglian astronomer, scholar of Toledo and importer of books; and of Adelard or Aethelard of Bath, who, in many wanderings through eastern and western lands, acquired learning from Greek and Arab, who translated Euclid and who showed his love of the quest for knowledge in other than purely mathematical ways in his philosophical treatise *De Eodem et Diverso*, an allegory in which Philocosmia, or the Lust of the World, disputes with Philosophia for the body and soul of the narrator.

The Christian learning of the west received fresh impetus in the middle of the eleventh century at the hands of Lanfranc, who made the monastic school at Bec a centre famous for its teaching, and who, when he came to England, to work for church and state, did not forget his earlier care for books and learning. It was under Lanfranc's direction that Osbern, the Canterbury monk, wrote his lives of earlier English ecclesiastics, of St Dunstan and St Alphege and St Odo; and he gave generously to the building of St Albans, a monastery which, under the abbacy of Lanfranc's well-beloved kinsman Paul, encouraged the spirit of letters in its specially endowed *scriptorium*, and so led the way to the conversion of annalist into historian illustrated in the person of Matthew Paris.

A consideration of the writings of Lanfranc himself falls outside our province; they consist of letters, commentaries and treatises

Commission—so Mr. Harold Williams, who discovered the document, thinks.[1]

In attempting to discover the circumstances which gave rise to a document concerning income and possessions, one must at least examine the hypothesis that this newly discovered manuscript dates from Swift's death—that it was prepared for his executors who would, of course, need the information it sets forth. The tone of the document at certain points, with the reference to Swift in the past tense and to his executors, at first glance faintly suggests that it was prepared at the time of his death. This tone, however, is just as appropriate for one who was already known to have lost his faculties and who, though physically alive, was dead in the eyes of the law, as Swift was according to the report of the Commission. The allusion to Swift's executors will not be puzzling when it is recollected that his will was made and witnessed long before 1742 and was easily available to Lyon and the Commission. But the evidence is final at least on this one point, that Swift was alive when the document was drawn up: the reference (see the eleventh item below) to the 'present Bishop of Clogher', to 'the present Dean', and their financial settlement concerning the deanery house which both occupied permits no other interpretation. The Bishop of Clogher can be no other than John Stearne, Swift's predecessor at St. Patrick's and afterwards Bishop of Clogher from 1717 to 1745. Since he predeceased Swift by a few months in 1745, the mention of him gives us one terminal date and proof that Swift was still alive. The latest date mentioned in the manuscript is 25 March 1741, which thus establishes that it was written between 1741 and 1745.

If, then, we take into account the circumstances, the nature of the document, and the various pieces of evidence—that the Commission of Lunacy was directed to make a valuation of Swift's income, that its report of the annual return of his 'lands, tithes, and tenements' tallies with the sum given in the manuscript under discussion, that the hand is that of John Lyon, an obvious choice to serve the Commission, that Swift was alive

[1] *Dean Swift's Library* (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 10, 13. From this same period is extant an inventory of Swift's personal property. From a photostat of the original in Swift's Hospital I find that though most of the items listed are in an unknown hand some are in the hand of Dr. Lyon, a further indication that he was making an accounting of Swift's possessions at this time. This inventory has been reprinted by T. P. Le Fanu in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, xxxvii, sec. c (1927), 263–75.

of the land, whose cycles of romance, including much that was borrowed from the adopted country, and, therefore, much that was easily assimilated, afforded, both in respect of form and of matter, excellent material for translation for many a year, until, in fact, the clipped wings had had time to grow again.

As before hinted, we do not know the extent of what we lost, and we cannot, with any advantage, proceed far on the road of aesthetic comparison between old and new. We must be content, therefore, to recognise to the full the gifts of the Norman race, and these were not confined to the making of literary English. For, as an outward and visible sign, still remaining in many places to testify, with the strengthening of our literature, to the change in art that accompanied the change in blood, and that gave expression to the change in thought, there stand the buildings erected throughout the land, as William of Malmesbury said, "after a style unknown before."

After the axe came the chisel; and this change of tool, which helps us to follow the steps that mark the development of Anglo-Norman architecture, may symbolise the development of language and letters in England under Anglo-Norman kings, a development that had begun years before the Conqueror had landed. When inflections had been well-nigh lopped off, and the language had been made more copious by additions to its ornamental vocabulary, the new "smiths of song"—whether graceless minstrel or ascetic priest—were able to give more adequate expression to the work of their hands and to branch out into less imitative ways. They were beating out the material in preparation for the coming of Chaucer.

clergymen constantly maintained, that a churchman is fortunate to receive half the value of his lands.

The second item concerns deanery lands in County Dublin:

The Lands of Dean Rath, Priest Town, Ballibane & Angerstown containing 357 Acres near Clondolkan yield p[er] Ann. £90. This Lease was renewed from 25: Dec[r] 1740 And £ was paid by way of Fine. N:B: M[r] Pearson the Tenant pays 20[s] p[er] Acre for these Lands.

Swift's predecessor, Stearne, had leased these County Dublin holdings in 1709 for an annual rental of £54. Swift appears to have induced the lessee to surrender this lease in 1720 for one returning a rental of £70 annually. In addition he reserved to himself during the last eleven years of the term of the lease thirty acres of Priest Town and 'all the Tythes for some time'. The lease on these lands was re-negotiated or renewed at least twice before Swift's death, and by 1740 he had almost doubled the yearly sum returned when he first became dean.[1]

The third item is concerned with tithes:

The Rectorial Tythes of Tallaght, Esker, Clondolkan, Tassagard & Rathcool, which y[e] Dean in his own Accompts rates at 420£ p[er] An: com[m]unibus *Annis* deducting all charges We reckon only at £400. Mem: A Piece of Land near Tallagh Ch: belonging to y[e] Dean called y[e] Dean's Croft is now inclosed with y[e] Gardens as I am informed of his Grace of Dublin.

The places mentioned are in County Dublin, and the tithes due from them account for approximately one-half of the total deanery income. It was here that Swift's revenues were most vulnerable: as he wrote to Pope, '. . . although tithes be of divine institution, they are of diabolical execution', and he regularly registers complaints about the difficulties of collection.[2] The whole matter of tithes was extremely complicated by, among other things, conflicting claims and divided ownership. For example, in three of the above-mentioned parishes Swift had claims to only portions of the tithes. In Tallaght all tithes were in the hands of lay impropriators except the great tithes, which were appropriate to the deanery of St. Patrick's; from Rathcool also Swift received only the great tithes, from

[1] See 'The Dean's Property' in the register of leases in St. Patrick's Cathedral; see also the 'Chapter Minute Book, 1720–1763', f. 100 v.

[2] *Corres.* iv. 127; cf. also iv. 81, 150, 219, 316, 351; v. 107.

of a new and powerful kingdom. Nothing is more significant than the way in which the Anglo-Norman chroniclers, whether native Englishmen or Normans domiciled in England, reflect the united patriotic sentiment which it was the design of Norman statesmanship to foster. Though composed in a foreign tongue, these chronicles are histories of England, and are written from a national English standpoint. It was under Henry I, whose marriage with Matilda seemed to symbolise the permanent union of the two peoples, that a new sense of national self-consciousness began to grow out of the Norman settlement. A shrewd observer of the next generation, Walter Map, tells us that it was Henry who effectually "united both peoples in a steadfast concord[1]." It was Henry's reign also that witnessed the transfer of the central seat of Norman power from Normandy to England. William of Malmesbury, himself half-Norman, half-English, in his account of the battle of Tinchebray, reminds his readers that it was fought "on the same day on which, about forty years before, William had first landed at Hastings"—a fact which the chronicler characteristically takes to prove "the wise dispensation of God that Normandy should be subjected to England on the same day that the Norman power had formerly arrived to conquer that kingdom[2]." In other words, England now became the predominant partner in the Anglo-Norman kingdom, and the twelfth century chroniclers are fully alive to the meaning of the change. As the dreams of a great Anglo-Norman empire began to take shape in the minds of the new rulers of England, and came to be temporarily realised under Henry II, the English historiographers rose to the height of their opportunities with patriotic ardour. No other country produced, during the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, anything to be compared with the English chronicles in variety of interest, wealth of information and amplitude of range. So wide is their outlook, and so authoritative is their record of events, that, as Stubbs observes, "it is from the English chroniclers of this period that much of the German history of the time has to be written[3]." The new England had become conscious of her power, and of her growing importance in the international economy of Europe.

In literature the most signal expression of that consciousness is the work of our Latin chroniclers. Thus, however unattractive much of this chronicle literature may be to the ordinary reader, there belongs to all of it the human interest of having been

[1] *De Nugis Curialium*, Dist. v, Cap. v. [2] *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, Bk. v.
[3] *Lectures on Medieval and Modern History*, p. 123.

This property is described in Swift's will as 'two houses or more lately built'. The lease, which was for a term of forty years, he bequeathed to his cousin Mrs. Whiteway. I have not been able to supply from existing documents the date of the renewal left blank in the manuscript.

The sixth item:

> The Residentiary House yields £5 which is paid by y^e^ Proctor of y^e^ Occonomy—who also pays y^e^ Dean's Duties reserved in all chapter Leases worth £10 p[er] Ann:

This item is of more than ordinary interest. It involves the two-way transaction which brought Swift the land for his famous garden, Naboth's Vineyard. The Residentiary House, deanery property located in Deanery Lane, was so named because it served as a place of residence for visiting canons when they came to serve their turns in the Cathedral. It was leased with clauses calling for a certain number of rooms to be kept free for this purpose.[1] In 1721 Swift agreed to renew a lease of the Residentiary House to the chapter of St. Patrick's for the sum of £5 annually; in return the chapter granted to Swift and his successors a lease on two acres of land belonging to the economy of the Cathedral, to run for a term of forty years provided that the lease of the Residentiary House should continue in force.[2] The two acres thus secured Swift turned into Naboth's Vineyard, the garden which he prized so highly and which served as a place to stable his horses and entertain his friends.

The seventh item:

> The Dean's fees by renewing Leases, Burials & other Contingencies worth £10 p[er] Ann.

The eighth item:

> There is also a small Tenement somewhat ruinous now in Deanery Lane or Mitre Ally worth £3 p[er] Ann.

The ninth item:

> The Dean's House Garden & Excellent offices all in very good Condition we value but low at £70.

[1] See the lease in the records at St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, between John Rous, Verger, and John Stearne, Dean, 1711.

[2] See the 'Chapter Minute Book, 1720–1763', f. 18 r.; cf. also f. 57 r., 17 April 1730, when the chapter sublet the Residentiary House to its sexton for £12 per annum.

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[1] *De Nugis Curialium, Dist. v, Cap. v.*
[2] *Gesta Regum Anglorum,*
[3] *Lectures on Mediaeval and Modern History, p. 122.*

of free bargaining between Stearne and Swift but was nece-
sitated by an Irish statute passed in the reign of William II
(10 Wm. III, c. 6) to encourage the building of houses an
other improvements upon church lands. It provided that any
clergyman who built a residence should receive two-thirds o
the expenditure from his immediate successor and that this
successor (or his heirs) in turn should receive one-third of the
original expenditure from the next successor.[1] Thus of the £900
spent by Stearne to construct the deanery house Swift paid him
£600, the two-thirds demanded by statute, and Swift (in this
case his executors) could expect £300, the one-third of the
original disbursement as demanded by the statute. This sum
of £300 is not figured in the final total in this manuscript,
properly so because it was to accrue at some future date whereas
this compilation is concerned with the *annual* return from
deanery possessions.

The twelfth item concerns Naboth's Vineyard:

> The Dean took about 2 Acres of Land adjoyning ye South side of ye Cabbage Garden which he called Naboth's Vineyard from ye Chapter subject to £3 p[er] An: besides 5s Dean's Duties & 3s Proctors fees. Which Ground (except a Garden being part thereof leased to one White at 5£ p[er] Ann:) was enclosed by a good Stone Wall ye South side of which is lined with Brick & plantd with ye best Fruit trees, & is separated from ye remainder laid out for pasture by a quick Set Hedge—To which ye Servants have access by a Gate at ye West end. This Naboth's Vineyard with White's Garden, the Dean has bequeathed to his Successor[s], provided they pay £300 to his Executors towards building his Hospital—otherwise ye Interest of it is to be sold to ye Highest Bidder.

Naboth's Vineyard, we learn from this item, was leased to
Swift for a rental of £3 per annum, probably a fair rental in
ts unimproved state. After Swift had built the 'cursed wall'
which cost him over £600, planted the fruit-trees, the quickset
edge, and made other improvements, its value was so en-
anced that his trustees could lease it in 1743 for four times that
m.[2] Naboth's Vineyard is the subject of a clause in Swift's
ll in which he expresses the earnest hope that his successors

[1] *The Statutes at Large passed in the Parliaments held in Ireland from ... 1310 to ... 1786* (Dublin, 1786), iii. 473 ff.

[2] See the lease between Arthur Lamprey and Swift's trustees, dated 25 Dec. ..., in the records of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.

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[2] *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, Bk. v.

[3] *Lectures on Medieval and Modern History*, p. 125.

'What Pretence', asked the anonymous author of an attack on *Gulliver's Travels*, 'has he more than any other Man, to a Thousand a Year for doing nothing, or little more than strutting behind a Verger, and Lording it over men honester, and more deserving than himself...?'[1] Although the deanery income was substantial in itself, it was of course not the whole of Swift's annual income. Since the manuscript under discussion is concerned with deanery possessions, it does not include Swift's income from the three parishes he held along with the deanery —Laracor, Rathbeggan, and Agher. Swift, one must remember, was a pluralist. Doubtless the tithes from these additional benefices decreased from the pleasing figure of £200 for which they were set in 1708 and 1714;[2] still the decrease came at a time when it could not seriously affect Swift's standard of living. Finally it should be observed that when Swift was most vocal and uneasy about his financial affairs he was accumulating that substantial sum which by 1736 amounted to £7,500. This money drew interest at rates ranging from 5 to 6 per cent.[3] As a matter of fact, ready money he found rather troublesome—so he indicated in an Advertisement in 1738 announcing that he 'is now able to lend two thousand pounds at five per cent upon good security'. His complaint is that since he cannot purchase a good estate for endowing his hospital, he is forced to keep his fortune in mortgages on lands and the like securities.[4]

On the whole, then, Swift deserves no great sympathy when he cries out his financial woes. The clue to his attitude is not so much in the actual state of his finances as in his temperament. It may be the truth, as he wrote to the Earl of Oxford in 1735, that his revenue had decreased by £300; but he adds a more significant truth with characteristic understatement: '... with good management I still make a shift to keep up, and am not poor, nor even moneyless'.[5]

[1] *A Letter from a Clergyman to his Friend, with an Account of Capt. Lemuel Gulliver* (London, 1726), p. 20. For another report that the deanery was worth £1,000 annually see E. Curll's *Dean Swift's Literary Correspondence, for twenty-four years; from 1714 to 1738* (London, 1741), p. 16.

[2] See Forster Collection, MS. 505. 48. D. 34/1, 'Private Expenses of Jonathan Swift, 1708–1709'. See also *Corres.* ii. 147. Swift's accounts for 1717 and 1736 show decreases, but apparently they do not give full information.

[3] *Corres.* vi. 87 n. But entries in his accounts for 11 April 1737 show arrears in interest. See Forster Collection, MS. 512. 48. D. 34/8.

[4] *Corres.* vi. 86–7.

[5] Ibid. v. 223.

chroniclers. Those of them who aspire to write history, as distinguished from mere contemporary annals, are studious both of literary ornament and of the symmetry and proportion of their narrative. Compiling and borrowing, as Geoffrey professes to do, from previous chroniclers, they all endeavour to impart some new life and colour to their materials. They take the great Bede as their native master in the art of historical writing. But, for their literary models, they look beyond him, and seek, like William of Malmesbury, to "season their crude materials with Roman art[1]." Even minor chroniclers, like Richard of Devizes, who confine themselves to the events of their own time, are fond of adorning their pages with classical allusions or quotations. Henry of Huntingdon is even more adventurous, and enlivens his narrative with frequent metrical effusions of his own. Most of them endeavour, according to their ability, to be readable, arming themselves, as Roger of Wendover does, against both "the listless hearer and the fastidious reader" by "presenting something which each may relish," and so providing for the joint "profit and entertainment of all[2]."

But, far more than their embellishments of style, their fulness and accuracy of detail and their patriotic motives, what gives life and permanent interest to the Anglo-Norman chronicles is the sense which they convey of intimate relationship with great men and great affairs. Even those chroniclers who do not pretend to write history on the larger scale, and only provide us with what Ralph of Diceto, in describing his own work, calls "outlines of histories," *imagines historiarum*, for the use of some future philosophic historian—even they succeed in conveying to us something, at least, of the animation of the stirring age in which they lived. They describe events of which they themselves were eye-witnesses; they preserve documents to which they had special privilege of access; they record impressions derived from direct contact with great statesmen, warriors and ecclesiastics; they retail anecdotes gathered from the cloister, the market-place and the court. For even the monastic chroniclers were not the mere recluses of the popular imagination. They were, in their way, men of the world, who, though themselves taking no active part in public affairs, lived in close intercourse with public men. The great abbeys, such as those of Malmesbury and of St Albans, were open houses, constantly visited by the mighty ones of the land. William of Malmesbury tells us how his own monastery was distinguished for its "delightful hospitality," where "guests, arriving every

[1] Preface to *Gesta Regum Anglorum*.

[2] Preface to *Flowers of History*

they were talking about; they were superior. Compare those with, say, the writers of the *Miscellany Letters* culled from Mist's weekly journal in 1722, and at once it strikes you that though the style is 'middle' enough it lacks this sense of authority. Sometimes, however, it seems to strive for it.

Where does Defoe stand in all this? His prose is often admirable, yet it seems to miss calm assurance, especially after the humiliation of prison and pillory; it certainly never has the least whiff of the patronizing. But naturally on turning to him from *Spectators* and *Guardians* we are at once reminded that more than the fashion of a time goes to determine how prose is written; and that the generalization we may have agreed to above too much smooths over the fact that prose is functional, that it is meant to do something. It is intended to produce varying emotional effects, some leading to action, others to a pleasurable pensiveness. Defoe from the early stages of his career as a writer understood this very well. Thus we read in *An Essay on Projects*[1] (1697):

> As for such who read books only to find out the author's *faux pas*, who will quarrel at the meanness of style, errors of pointing, dulness of expression, or the like, I have little to say to them. . . . As to language, I have been rather careful to make it speak English suitable to the manner of the story, than to dress it up with exactness of style; choosing rather to have it free and familiar, according to the nature of essays, than to strain at a perfection of language, which I rather wish for, than pretend to be master of.

We can only guess at what he meant by 'essay'—he was capable of calling anything an essay, even a doggerel poem—but he clearly meant something unaffected, unstilted, possibly unrhetorical. Yet as you listen to the way he varies the end of his clauses—always an important place in prose—the passage strikes you as written by a man who is by nature a stylist: it is a pleasure to the ear; both the vowels and the incidence of stress are well modulated. His statement might too easily be made to imply more than he really meant; nevertheless it contains a principle: language must be 'suitable to the manner of the story'. There is then no one style for him; his subject-matter will to some extent dictate what his style is to be.

But prose is moulded by yet another factor which Defoe was

[1] Quotations have throughout been modernized in spelling, &c.

first continuator of the latter. The rest of Simeon's narrative, extending to the year 1129, probably represents his own independent work. Little is known of Simeon's life, and it is impossible to determine whether he was the actual compiler, or merely the editor, of the chronicle which bears his name. His work, however, had a high repute throughout the Middle Ages, and his fame was second only to that of Bede among the writers of the Northumbrian school. Simeon's chronicle was continued down to the close of the reign of Stephen by two priors of Hexham. The elder of the two, Richard, wrote an account of the *Acts of King Stephen, and the Battle of the Standard*, which contains much original information. His son, John, brought the narrative down to the year 1154, and is an independent authority of considerable value. Another north-countryman, the canonised Ailred or Ethelred, a Cistercian monk of Rievaulx, claims a place among the many chroniclers who wrote of the battle of the Standard. His account is neither so full nor so trustworthy as that of Richard of Hexham, but is somewhat more ambitious, in that it professes to give, after the manner of the classical historians, the speeches of the rival leaders before the encounter. For a brief period about the middle of the twelfth century there was, in Northumbria as elsewhere, a curious break in the activity of the chroniclers. But, in the next generation, two writers who worthily uphold the traditions of the northern school appear in William of Newburgh and Roger of Hoveden. William confines himself to his own times; but Roger attempts a comprehensive history of several centuries, and, gathering his materials from the best available authorities, gives us what Stubbs calls "the full harvest of the labours of the Northumbrian historians."

The first Latin chronicler of any importance who belongs to southern England is Florence of Worcester, already mentioned as one of Simeon of Durham's main sources. Florence's work is notable as being the first attempt in England at a universal history beginning with the Creation and embracing within its compass all the nations of the known world. But, as the title of his chronicle—*Chronicon ex Chronicis*—frankly indicates, Florence is not much more than a laborious compiler from the works of others, and he took as the basis of the early portions of his narrative the universal chronicle of Marianus Scotus, an Irish monk of the eleventh century. Marianus, in his turn, is, so far as English history is concerned, only a compiler from Bede and the Old English *Chronicle*. He brings his record of events down to the year 1082, but it is so fragmentary and perfunctory in its treatment of English affairs

his own way; and half as much afterwards to lop off its excrescences, or abstract it: And then, especially if it were on a trading subject, no Author of his time could produce a more finished performance.

Thus, for example, in the extract quoted earlier, the passages between hooks were left out. Do the omissions weaken the statement? It would seem not. Had Defoe, then, no style? Or a bad style? One might think the worst; but then one remembers the perfect unstressed realism of *Mrs. Veal*, the thousand felicities in *Moll Flanders*, the brilliant satire, and sometimes perhaps subtler irony, in some of his political writing. The conciseness, often terrifying, in the *Journal of the Plague Year*, or some magnificences, such as the 'roaring lion' passage in *Captain Singleton*, spring to the mind; so that if one can indeed say that Defoe has no style it is because he has a hundred. Here, as in everything else, he shows a staggering variety, at almost every instant making his words 'suitable to the manner of the story', so that you may get two or three styles on the same page. Can we find a common denominator? Is there throughout his styles some hall-mark of personality which might enable you to hazard boldly when faced with a disputed work, 'This is—or is not—by Defoe?' A task beyond the scope of this essay: but to talk about it may entertain, and help to clear the ground.

It must be confessed that it seems unlikely, in spite of various scattered remarks, that Defoe ever thought about style in the way that Addison, or Pope, or Swift, or Bolingbroke thought about it. His great strokes of artistry—and he abounds in them—seem entirely unconscious. Take, for instance, the semicolon, made famous by Coleridge, which occurs when Crusoe is rummaging about the abandoned ship before she breaks up. Going through the drawers in the cabin, he notes with complacency that he owns many useful articles such as razors, knives, and forks; then he comes upon

> . . . about thirty-six pounds value in money, some European coin, some Brazil, some pieces of eight, some gold, some silver.
>
> I smiled to myself at the sight of this money. O drug! said I aloud, what art thou good for? Thou art not worth to me, no, not the taking off the ground; one of those knives is worth all this heap; I have no manner of use for thee; even remain where thou art, and go to the bottom as a creature whose life is not worth saving: However, upon second thoughts, I took it away; and wrapping all this in a piece of canvas . . . .

distinguished most of all by its design and sense of proportion. Eadmer is almost modern in his deliberate limitation of himself to a period and a special subject upon which he could speak as a first-hand authority. His example in this respect was not without its effect upon more than one historiographer of the next generation. Richard of Devizes and the author of the *Acts of Stephen* are chroniclers who make up for the brevity of their narratives by the graphic force which belongs only to a contemporary record. In addition to his *History*, Eadmer wrote a Latin life of Anselm, and upon all that concerns the character and the work of that great prelate there is no more trustworthy authority.

Ordericus Vitalis, the son of Norman parents but born in Shropshire in 1075, was a writer of much more ambitious scope than Eadmer. His voluminous *Ecclesiastical History*, borrowing its title from Bede's great work, extends from the beginning of the Christian era down to the year 1141. It is in thirteen books, and represents the labour and observation of some twenty years of the writer's life. It is a characteristic product of the cloister. The church, and all that concerns it, are, throughout, uppermost in Orderic's mind, and determine his standpoint and design as a historian. But he had sufficient curiosity and knowledge of the world to gather and place on record a vast amount of information about mundane affairs. Taken over to Normandy to be educated at the early age of ten, he spent his life as a monk of St Evroul; but he was not without opportunities of travel, and he paid at least one visit to England for the express purpose of collecting material for his *History*. Although he is often inaccurate in his chronology, and confusing in the arrangement of his matter, Orderic is one of our standard historical authorities for the Norman period. He is especially valuable for the information he gives as to the condition of Normandy itself during the eleventh, and part of the twelfth, century, and his *History* deals even more with continental than with English affairs. Yet he always prided himself upon his English birth; he even called himself an Englishman, and could, in Freeman's words, "at once admire the greatness of the Conqueror and sympathise with the wrongs of his victims." Orderic's very defects of arrangement and order as a chronicler were the result of a curiosity and a range of interest which add much to the value of his work as a minute and varied contemporary record. He tells us much that is not found elsewhere about the social conditions of his time, about property, about the monastic profession and even about the occupations, tastes, pastimes and personal appearance

pray that the Queen would act on its recommendations; we can see how it was that the Dissenters should be panic-stricken. To us, who are in the secret, Defoe is *playing* the shocked pietist to perfection; indeed, as far as he was concerned, to disastrous perfection.

His fault was not to realize that such a form of attack is safe only if people know who you are, and understand your gambit: otherwise you must somehow tip the wink. You can do this either by exaggerating so outrageously that no one can take you literally, as Swift did in *A Modest Proposal*; or else you must carry your argument not merely to the point of common-sense absurdity—for that much Defoe did—but to a point of logical absurdity which no one can mistake, as when Swift says in the *Argument Against the Abolishing of Christianity*:

> Nor do I think it wholly groundless, or my fears altogether imaginary, that the abolishing Christianity may perhaps bring the Church in danger . . . ,

or when Pope in *Guardian*, no. 40, tells his readers that Philips's feeble rival often 'deviates into downright poetry'.

Defoe was too single-minded, too simple-hearted; once the demon of imaginative creation got hold of him, he was as one obliviously possessed: he was, in *The Shortest Way*, the high-flyer in person: he never learnt the lesson of detachment, and in his anti-Jacobite pamphlets was as dangerously Jacobite as he had been high-flying over ten years earlier. It was this faculty—the one which constitutes him a genius of the first order—which made *Mrs. Veal* so beautifully convincing. He could not be ironical, we think. Take that astonishing, incomparable masterpiece, *Moll Flanders*: it is full of delicious irony so long as we keep outside Moll. But, given his absorbed interest, could Defoe do so? We are almost forced to think that here too it was unconscious as it was in *Robinson Crusoe*. Yet, we say, surely not in the Preface:

> . . . When a woman debauched from her youth, nay, even being the offspring of debauchery and vice, comes to give an account of all her vicious practices . . . an author must be hard put to it to wrap it up so clean as not to give room, especially for vicious readers, to turn it to his disadvantage.

'Vicious readers'! It is easy to pass this over carelessly, but what a superb little stroke of ironic satire it is; as lightly

art; and the task of writing the history of England presented itself to him as a patriotic duty, all the more clearly incumbent upon him because of the "criminal indolence" of those who might have continued the work of Bede[1].

Bede, then, is William's great exemplar, and the fount of his inspiration—Bede, with whom "was buried almost all knowledge of history down to our own times," and whose praises William protests that he has "neither the abilities nor the eloquence" adequately to blazon[1]. For the materials of the earlier portions of his *History* William states[2] that he searched far and wide; and, while he borrowed from nearly every known work of his time, he evidently draws upon other sources which have not been identified. But he by no means borrows indiscriminately. He sifts and selects his material, and cautions his readers against accepting the testimony of his authorities too implicitly. That he was not, however, so very much in advance of his time is shown by the fact that he, in company with more credulous chroniclers, gravely records marvels and seemingly supernatural occurrences as authentic historical events. The evidence of a respectable eye-witness is, in most of these cases, sufficient warrant for unquestioning belief. Anecdotes, also, of every kind, seem to have had a peculiar charm for William, and, at the end of his third book, he quaintly excuses his fondness for including them in his *History* by saying that, "if I am not too partial to myself, a variety of anecdote cannot be displeasing to any one, unless he be morose enough to rival the superciliousness of Cato." To the modern reader, who looks for literary entertainment as much as for authentic history, William's ingenuous habits of reminiscence, of quotation, of anecdotal digression and of sententious comment add much to the personal charm and vivacity of his narrative.

He is at his best, however, when he brings all his powers of rhetoric and his faculty of pictorial writing to bear upon the description of some great event or stirring public movement. His graphic account of the first crusade, for example, has about it a spaciousness and a wealth of colour which all but rival the glowing periods of Gibbon.

This ardent love not only inspired the continental provinces, but even all who had heard the name of Christ, whether in the most distant islands or savage countries. The Welshman left his hunting, the Scot his fellowship with vermin, the Dane his drinking-party, the Norwegian his raw fish. Lands were deserted of their husbandmen; houses of their inhabitants; even whole

[1] Bk. I, ch. 3. [2] Bk. II, prol.

Then he begins to vary the refrain:

> Shutting all people out of employment, and the service of their prince and country, unless they can comply with indifferent ceremonies of religion, is far from the way to peace and union—

and it becomes '. . . cannot tend to this peace and union', or '. . . cannot contribute to peace and union'. He is, of course, whipping up the mob to a frenzy; he knows the enormous emotive force of the reiterated drum-beat, as Mark Antony knew it when he spoke over Caesar's corpse.

Compare this with the sort of effect Swift was to get in *The Conduct of the Allies* some ten years later. Swift, we realize in reading, was a more sophisticated person, yet in his English political period (which some of us who love him may be allowed to deplore) he was appealing to much the same mob emotions as Defoe played upon; perhaps, however, the reading populace was, after ten years of political tension exacerbated by journalistic fury, itself becoming sophisticated. Here at all events, the appeal seems to be to reason. Whereas Defoe is shouting 'You over there on the pavement, can't you see . . .?', Swift is saying, 'Well, of course, we sensible men sitting round the table can see . . . .' Here he is piling one 'if' clause upon another:

> But if all this be true: if, according to what I have affirmed, we began this war contrary to reason: if, as the other party themselves, upon all occasions, acknowledge, the success we have had was more than we could reasonably expect: if, after all our success, we have not made that use of it, which in reason we ought to have done: if [and here one watches the clauses lengthen out] we have made weak and foolish bargains with our allies, suffered them tamely to break every article, even in those bargains to our disadvantage, and allowed them to treat us with insolence and contempt, at the very instant when we were gaining towns, provinces, and kingdoms for them, at the price of our ruin, and without any prospect of interest to ourselves: if we have consumed all our strength in attacking the enemy on the strongest side, where (as the old Duke of Schomberg expressed it) to engage with France, was to take the bull by the horns; and left wholly unattempted, that part of the war, which could only enable us to continue or to end it: if all this, I say, be our case, it is a very obvious question to ask, by what motives, or what management, we are thus become the dupes and bubbles of Europe?

Swift, we would say, is the more persuasive; but who can judge which was the more effective at the time? For one thing we do

art; and the task of writing the history of England presented itself to him as a patriotic duty, all the more clearly incumbent upon him because of the "criminal indolence" of those who might have continued the work of Bede[1].

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[1] Bk. I, ch. 3.

[2] Bk. II, prol.

to you, Gentlemen, of various other parts of England—you have met, mobbed, rabbled, and thrown dirt at one another; the horse have trampled down the foot, the foot have stoned and hurried the horse, men's heads, arms, and legs, have been broke, some come home bruised, some bloody—Northampton, Whitchurch, Coventry, London, Westminster, Norwich, Marlow—and innumerable other places, the fighting, the rabbles, tumults, and extravagancy, are not to be enumerated—Now, pray, what do ye call this?—Shall we call this a free choice?—No man will, I believe, pretend to it.

It is, as often with Defoe, so urgent as to be breathless; the construction tends to get out of hand, and has to be recalled to order by some desperate means. Yet he himself has not been run away with: he has pulled himself up; the rating tone of a magistrate reproving a mob becomes judicial: 'Now, Gentlemen, before we enter into particulars . . .'; and the number (24 October) develops into a beautifully argued plea for calmness. His tones, however, are infinite,and he can be really shocked and grieved, in dignified prose, at treachery;

Never open your mouths after this about public faith, the honour of treaties, justice to allies, the standing fast to confederacies and the like; whoever may complain of these things, it is not for those I am speaking of to open their mouths about it now.

It is all too rarely, perhaps, that Defoe attains that level of dignity.

But dignified he can be, especially when violently attacked, and once, certainly, he had the advantage of his most redoubtable opponent. Swift, in *Examiner* 15 of 11 November 1710, commented on 'two stupid and illiterate scribblers, both of them fanatics by profession: I mean the *Review* and *Observator*', and embroidered the theme by referring to 'rough, dirty hands', 'outrageous party writers', and 'idiots'. On 14 December Defoe answered:

Besides, among all the authors of whom the streets abound—with my humble service to Mr. Examiner, I recommend it to him, to answer this civil question—If, Sir, you have so much learning, how came you to have so little manners?

Again, while Addison in *Count Tariff* calls Mercator 'a false, shuffling, prevaricating rascal', Mercator (we assume him to have been Defoe) on 26–9 September 1713 refers to the Guardian as 'a man whose sense and good manners qualify

1125 and 1130. The work was dedicated to Alexander; and the prefatory letter ends, characteristically, with an invocation in verse both of the Divine blessing and of the approbation of his episcopal patron. The entire *History*, frequently revised and extended, ends with the year 1154. Its earlier portions are borrowed, with many embellishments, from Bede and the Old English *Chronicle*. In many places Henry simply translates from the old English annals, and among his translations is a metrical version, though much curtailed, of the famous song on *The Battle of Brunanburh*. Henry prided himself on his accomplishments in verse, and his *History* is decorated with many poetical passages. Of his work, as a whole, the best that can be said is that it shows some sense of design, and of proportion in its execution; he treats of the history of England up to his time as dividing itself naturally into the four periods of the Roman, the Saxon, the Danish and the Norman occupations. It is when he comes to deal with the Norman dominion, and especially with the events of his own time, that he is most disappointing. At the beginning of the seventh book he states that, after having so far relied upon either "ancient writers or common report," he is about to "deal with events which have passed under" his "own observation, or have been told to" him "by eye-witnesses." Neither in the seventh nor in the eighth book do we find much to justify the expectation thus raised. Henry was a facile writer, but a perfunctory historian. "He was ambitious, but not laborious; literary, but not exact; intelligent, but not penetrating. He formed large projects, but was too indolent to execute them satisfactorily[1]." Henry's rhetorical pages are brought to an appropriate close with a glowing peroration, in verse, celebrating the accession of king Henry II. What appears to have been at one time intended to stand as the eighth book of the *History* is a treatise *On the Contempt of the World*—a letter, addressed to a friend named Walter, upon the fortunes of "the bishops and the illustrious men of his age." This work, both the title and the motive of which remind us of more imposing literary achievements by greater men, contains many vivid portraits of Henry of Huntingdon's famous contemporaries.

A chronicler who is as great an authority, for the reign of which he treats, as either William of Malmesbury or Henry of Huntingdon, is the anonymous author of the *Acts of Stephen* (*Gesta Stephani*). Not even William himself surpasses this writer

[1] Thomas Arnold, preface to Rolls edition.

Mandeville's 'parson in a tye-wig'. He is not only superior, he is the Superior Person. You do not follow the workings of a mind. It is refreshing to turn back to Defoe, and, skipping one paragraph, read:

Thus in Nature the Philosopher's Business is not to look through Nature, and come to the vast open Field of Infinite Power. . . . Philosophy's a-ground if it is forc'd to any further Enquiry. The Christian begins just where the Philosopher ends; and when the Enquirer turns his Eyes up to Heaven, farewel Philosopher; 'tis a Sign he can make nothing of it here.

Deftly and concisely put: there is no shilly-shallying or evasion, no glozing over the difficulty; you are stark up against it, and in direct contact with Defoe's mind.

At that time (1704), though already too prolix, he still had the leisure to be economical where he wished. It is tempting to think that but for the unceasing, relentless torrent of words he was compelled to produce (partly by his own nature, it is true) from 1704 onwards, he might have learnt to castigate his prose. When later on he became a speculative moralist he was much more long-winded—but then moralizing lends itself to prosiness. Here we have him in Crusoe's *Serious Reflections* . . . of 1720. The section sets off in a brave *Spectator* manner: 'Conversation is the brightest and most beautiful part of life; 'tis an emblem of the enjoyment of a future state. . . .' Then, after a somewhat wordy description of the conversationalist who is a good man, we get:

But take this with you in the character of this happy man, namely that he is always a good man, a religious man: 'tis a gross error to imagine, that a soul blacken'd with vice, loaded with crime, degenerated into immorality and folly, can be that man, can have this calm, serene soul, those clear thoughts, those constant smiles upon his brow, and the steady agreeableness and pleasantry in his temper, that I am speaking of; there must be intervals of darkness upon such a mind; storms in the conscience will always lodge clouds upon the countenance; and where the weather is hazey within, it can never be sun-shine without; the smiles of a disturbed mind are all but feigned and forged; there may be a good disposition, but it will be too often and too evidently interrupted by the recoils of the mind, to leave the temper untouched, and the humour free and unconcerned; when the drum beats an alarm within, it is impossible but the disturbance will be discovered without.

"inasmuch as they have not the book in the British speech which Walter brought over from Britanny."

All this affectation of mystery, however, does not prevent Geoffrey from openly commending his work to the favourable notice of the two great men whose confidence and encouragement William and Henry respectively enjoyed. The main body of his *History* is dedicated to earl Robert of Gloucester, while the seventh book, consisting of the famous prophecies of Merlin, is prefaced by an almost fulsomely laudatory letter addressed to Alexander of Lincoln. Geoffrey was thus determined to lose nothing of the prestige and credit to be derived from aristocratic patronage; and his dedications only confirm the assumption that he imitates the practices and assumes the pose of an authentic chronicler with the deliberate purpose of mystifying his readers. For Geoffrey's *History* is, on the last analysis, a prose romance, and, in its Arthurian portions in particular, a palpable excursion in fiction. One need not believe that the entire work is, in the words of William of Newburgh, a tissue of "impudent and shameless lies." Even the reference to "the British book" cannot altogether be regarded as a ruse for the deception of the ingenuous reader. Geoffrey doubtless drew upon some documents, possibly Welsh, which have since been lost. He borrowed all he could from Bede and Nennius; he probably borrowed more from floating British traditions. What is even more certain is that he invented a great deal. It is impossible to read the later books of the *History* without feeling that Geoffrey, when he had embarked upon the history of Merlin and of Arthur, was fully conscious of his opportunities of romantic dilatation. Arthur was a British prince capable of being exalted into a heroic figure who should overshadow both Alexander and Charlemagne. These two potentates were already the titular heroes of profitably worked romantic cycles. Why should Britain not have its romantic "matter," as well as Rome and France? Read in the light of the general literary history of its time, and of its immediate and immense popularity, Geoffrey's *History* can be adequately explained only as the response of a British writer, keenly observant of the literary tendencies of the day, to the growing demand for romance. How well he succeeded in his design appears from William of Newburgh's complaint that he had "made the little finger of his Arthur stouter than the back Alexander the Great."

The *History of the Kings of Britain* was compl

mind (or temper), in exactly the same way as when that mind undergoes various avatars in his type-personages. Thus it is that, for example, Moll Flanders' veracious unveracity, her unconscious, innocently amoral self-betrayals, are among the most enchanting things in literature. It does not matter here his not being able to stop to polish or refine—he certainly lacked any vestige of the art to blot—because there is no construction. Since Defoe is the object, nothing comes between the object and you; no moralizing is forced on you from outside.

It is then, we may think, in the great six-years period of creative writing, in the works with which most people are familiar, that Defoe made his contribution to English prose; for there the style which he now found it easiest to write was beautifully 'suitable to the manner of the story'. Treatises on trade, histories of the Devil, handbooks on servants, journalism on street robberies and all those later works are no longer read, because they all needed a style more concise and more detached than Defoe now found it in him to write. So long as the matter was to hand for his superb impersonations, and his experiences to give them the verisimilitude of reported fact were unexhausted, his prose seemed to form itself naturally to give substance to the image which presented itself, one may well think, simultaneously with the emotion, moral or artistic, which inspired him. The prose itself is seldom economical, but there are such leaps as in the *Robinson Crusoe* passage quoted. It is not arrow-swift, but it bustles over the ground at a tremendous pace; it is neither unhurried nor authoritative, but it impels you to follow at its own speed; it seldom ravishes the ear, but it hardly ever offends it. Good-mannered because it never makes assumptions about you, the reader, it is also modest, and rarely fatigues. And because it is always true to the movements of Defoe's mind, without that mind containing any reservations, undistorted, as Coleridge might say, by the least pause of reflex consciousness, it is immensely effective so long as you take care to remain alert.

But Geoffrey has exacted still greater homage from the poets. Lear and Cymbeline and Sabrina, "virgin daughter of Locrine," are names that link his memory for ever with the two supreme poetical geniuses of England. Here, indeed, is a distinction which the greatest of the chroniclers might have coveted; and it is enough to mark the *History of the Kings of Britain* as the most significant literary product of the twelfth century.

Geoffrey, however, succeeded in deluding so many honest chroniclers who followed him that, in modern times, he has been altogether proscribed from the company of sober historians. Even before the twelfth century was out, his credit had come to be gravely questioned. Giraldus Cambrensis, who had himself no mean gift for the artistic manipulation of the legendary and the marvellous, is one of Geoffrey's severest detractors. According to Gerald, a certain Welshman named Meilyr was reported to have an extraordinary familiarity with unclean spirits, and they never responded to his call in greater numbers than when Geoffrey's book was placed on his bosom. Gerald, as is well known, had a strong sense of humour, and, probably all he means to imply is that Geoffrey had over-reached himself in the art of romance. It is otherwise with William of Newburgh. He regarded Geoffrey as one who had deliberately and flagrantly profaned the sacred functions of the historian, and devotes the entire preface of his chronicle to a vehement denunciation of Geoffrey's motives and to an exposure of his fabrications.

This severe preface has contributed as much as anything to the high repute in which William of Newburgh is held as a critical historian. Freeman's description of him as "the father of historical criticism[1]" has often been repeated, but scarcely seems deserved when we compare his actual achievement with that of his greater namesake of Malmesbury. For William of Newburgh belongs to that group of modest chroniclers who are content with treating a limited period, and describe, mainly, the events of their own lifetime. His *History* extends from the Conquest to the year 1198; but the narrative down to the time of Stephen is so compressed as to make the work, in effect, an account of the reigns of Stephen and Henry II. For the latter reign there are few better authorities. His work, as a whole, forms the best single commentary upon the history of the twelfth century left us by any writer of his day. For William's chronicle is no mere bare record of events, but an ordered and critical presentment of the affairs of his time, with due regard to

[1] *Contemporary Review*, Vol. xxxiii (1878), p. 216.

they are short, having one unit or, at the most, two or three stanzas. Two are single units of four couplets. Another pair consist of two quatrains each. Three have a pattern of six octosyllabic couplets in two stanzas. Of the others, no two are exactly alike in form. The longest, possibly intended as an ode, is about fifty lines in length and is formal and intricate in structure. An irregular strophic pattern is used for three: one of twelve lines consists of an iambic quatrain, a ballad stanza, and a tetrameter quatrain; another of sixteen lines has an introductory tetrameter quatrain followed by two stanzas of three octosyllabic couplets each; a third of ten lines has a ballad stanza followed by two tercets of tetrameter lines. The comic song is in quatrains with emphatically marked time-beat and rhyme. The drinking song has two graceful five-line stanzas of anapestic dimeter and trimeter lines. One of them, the spinet song, is in madrigal form with eleven lines rhyming *aa*, *bbb*, *ccdd*, *bb* in an arrangement of four- and five-stressed lines. As lyrics, they have a definite sense of design. Conscious artistry, metrical precision, and a quiet mien, hall-marks of eighteenth-century light verse at its best, are not lacking in Steele's songs.

The unusual number of them in the three early plays seems to indicate that he sought openings for music; but, unlike his fellow playwrights who merely gave the direction 'Here a Song', he tried to make them a part of the action. True, *The Funeral* has a conventional ending, 'Here a dance and the following songs': whereupon 'Arise, arise, great dead for arms renowned' and 'On yonder bed supinely laid' were sung by musicians awaiting their cue in the wings. Likewise *The Lying Lover* ends formally with the singing of a compliment to Queen Anne, 'The rolling years the joys restore'. But in the main the purpose of Steele's songs is not merely to mark a pause or create a moment of diversion; they serve to highlight a character or a situation or are episodic in themselves. In *The Funeral*, for example, 'Let not love on me bestow', intended by its author Campley to introduce his declaration to Lady Harriot, is talked about in two scenes before it is heard: why it was written, how it has been practised to the spinet, what the air is like, what the rhyme-scheme is, who is to sing it, and where. And in a dramatic episode the paper of verses is made to conceal a cheque presented to the insolvent Lord Hardy by his friend Campley. When the expected moment arrives there is a difference of opinion as to whether

In close touch with the court were men like Gilbert Foliot and Richard Fitz-Neale; Ralph of Diceto, who was dean of St Paul's during Fitz-Neale's episcopate, and Ranulf de Glanville, whose name is associated with one of the earliest and most valuable treatises on the laws and customs of England, though the real author of it was, more probably, his nephew, Hubert Walter; Giraldus Cambrensis and Walter Map, Gervase of Tilbury and Peter of Blois. In remoter haunts, though having frequent opportunities of intercourse with men of action and of affairs, were Gervase of Canterbury and Nigel Wireker, John of Salisbury and Richard of Devizes, Benedict of Peterborough and William of Newburgh and Roger of Hoveden. Altogether, there was in the country, as Stubbs says, "such a supply of writers and readers as would be found nowhere else in Europe, except in the University of Paris itself."

Several of these names are of the first importance in the list of our Latin chroniclers. That of Benedict of Peterborough is associated with the most authoritative chronicle of the reign of Henry II, but only (as is now known) on the strength of the fact that one of the extant MSS of the work was transcribed under his order. Benedict, however, was by no means a mere director of other men's literary labours, for he is known to have either written or edited accounts of the passion and the miracles of Becket. The author of the chronicle long ascribed to him still remains undiscovered. Begun about 1172, the work bears in the main all the marks of a contemporary narrative, and includes several important documents. Stubbs holds that the internal evidence is sufficient to prove not only that the chronicle was not by Benedict, but that it is not the work of a monastic writer at all.

> It has not even in its most disjointed portion the disorderly form, the disproportionate details, the unimportant memoranda, the generally undigested character, of monastic annals. It displays no propension to monastic institutions, or to those principles and persons that were especially favoured by monks. The author did not even trouble himself to compose an original account of Becket's martyrdom. Whatever positive indications are to be found point to a member of the king's court rather than to a monk, or even a secular churchman[1].

Stubbs's conjecture that the chronicle may have been the work of Richard Fitz-Neale, and is a transcript of that writer's lost *Tricolumnis*, "merely altered from its inconvenient tripartite shape," has not found much acceptance among scholars. Fitz-Neale, who was

[1] Preface to edition in *Rolls Series*, p. lvi.

stage songs, he designates in only one instance, and for a song performed humorously: Mrs. Fardingale sends her servant to fetch a lute, to which she plays an accompaniment for her 'squalling'. It is regarded facetiously also in the burlesque song, 'Cynderaxa', composed by Trim (Pinkethman) in honour of his cook-maid sweetheart and performed, by the stage direction, to a 'Pair of tongs', which he calls his lute. A number of the settings are written 'within the compass of the flute' with instrumental parts for the common or the German flute; and possibly several were sung to one of these instruments played off stage or to the band of strings furnishing the act-tunes. Either arrangement may have been followed for those formally introduced into the text and according to Steele's caption sung by named musicians; and likewise for those sung by 'The Boy' at Lord Hardy's summons and by Captain Clerimont's servant. A flautist or a violinist may have stood in the wings when Bookwit entered 'with bottle and glass singing'. String music may have accompanied 'Venus has left', for the foppish Bookwit calls upon his band of fiddlers to 'strike up' for the song.

But the most interesting point to note is Steele's liking for the spinet. In each of the early plays there is a spinet scene. In *The Funeral* Campley and Mrs. Fardingale declare they have practised 'Let not love' to this instrument; and, when the moment arrives for singing, Lady Sharlot says rather pointedly—'There is the spinet, Mr. Campley; I know you're musical.' For the spinet song in *The Lying Lover*, the 'master' is summoned 'from the next room', and the direction follows, 'Here the song is performed to a spinet':

> Thou soft machine that dost her hand obey,
> Tell her my grief in thy harmonious lay.
>
> . . . .
>
> Speak in melting sounds my tears
> Speak my joys, my hopes, my fears—
>
> . . . . . .

In *The Tender Husband* Mrs. Clerimont's 'spinet-master' arrives opportunely and plays and sings 'With studied airs'. Steele is more explicit in his directions than any other playwright of the period. He may have been partial to keyboard music, or he may have sought to evoke in these episodes the social atmosphere of chamber music. The spinet or small harpsichord was a popular domestic instrument, and his play scenes with the

"Well illustrated as the reigns of Henry II and Richard are," says Stubbs[1], "one side of their character would be imperfectly known, and some of the crises of their policies would be almost inexplicable," without Ralph of Diceto. Ralph was another chronicler whose public life and position brought him into close contact with the great men of his time, and gave him access to the best sources of information. He was for many years archdeacon of Middlesex, and, from the year 1180 until his death, about 1202, held the deanery of St Paul's. "Diceto" appears to have been an artificial Latin name adopted by Ralph to signify his association with some place, probably French, which had no proper Latin name of its own. His chief work is entitled *Imagines Historiarum*, or *Outlines of Histories*, extending from the year 1148 down to 1202. Robert de Monte's chronicle forms the basis of his narrative down to 1172; from that year begin his own original memoranda, which are of especial value as contemporary records from 1183 onwards. Ralph is one of the most sober and straightforward of the chroniclers, and is little given to gossip or rhetorical decoration. His work is somewhat deficient in orderly arrangement, and its chronology is not always to be relied upon. Ralph, however, had much of the insight of the historian who seeks to analyse and to account for, as well as to record, public events and movements, and he was a shrewd judge of character and motive. His chronicle is illustrated by many important contemporary documents, to which his position gave him special means of access.

Of several of the other chroniclers who wrote during the latter part of the twelfth, and the opening years of the thirteenth, century, only a passing mention need be made. Gervase of Canterbury, who died about 1210, is chiefly remembered as an ecclesiastical historian, and as one of the standard authorities on the contemporary history of the see to which he belonged. One of his works, entitled *Gesta Regum*, which is of some value as illustrating the reign of John, perpetuates the Brutus legend to which Geoffrey of Monmouth had given a startling currency. A more important authority for king John's reign is Ralph, abbot of the Cistercian abbey of Coggeshall, whose *Chronicon Anglicanum* (1066—1223) contains, among other things, a full and well-informed account of Richard I's crusade. That crusade has been described by several chroniclers, but by none more graphically than by a monkish writer whose *History of King Richard I* is one of the briefest of the many contemporary narratives penned in the twelfth

[1] Preface to Vol. II of edition of Ralph de Diceto in *Rolls S.*

atmosphere, would be heightened by the orchestral performance of Croft's act-tunes.[1]

The music for the songs as first performed was written by theatrical composers of the day—Daniel Purcell, William Croft, Richard Leveridge, Lewis Ramondon, and John Ernest Galliard—all of them good musicians. At mid-century the names of Thomas Arne, (——) Sullivan, and (——) Bagley were added to the list and in the final decades that of John Stafford Smith. Three settings are by unnamed composers. Several of the songs were sung to popular tunes, for example to a minuet by Francesco Geminiani, the violinist, and to airs composed for other lyrics by Maurice Greene, George Monro, and J. C. Pepusch. At least in the first run of the early plays certain of them may have been performed by the actors themselves. In the roles of Campley, Bookwit, and Captain Clerimont, Robert Wilks, said to have had a fine singing voice, may have sung 'Let not love' and 'Since the day' and probably on occasion 'Why, lovely charmer'. Mrs. Letitia (?) Cross, cast as Mrs. Clerimont, and Mrs. Lucas as Lettice the maid, were singers as well as actresses. Mrs. Cross doubtless sang 'With studied airs'; and Mrs. Lucas, as she was in the scene, may have performed 'To Celia's Spinet'. But also associated with the singing are the names of professional musicians who had nothing at all to do with the action. Richard Leveridge, James Bowen, (——) Pate, Lewis Ramondon, Francis (?) Hughes, Mrs. Harris, Mary Anne Campion, and, later in the century, Kitty Clive and 'Mr.' Sullivan sang Steele's songs in the play performances and, sometimes, in the music-hall as favourite airs.

The settings are preserved on folio half-sheets or whole sheets

[1] Croft's work is preserved in a book of manuscript music at the Library of Congress, Division of Music (M 1515. A 11 Case), *Play House Aires*, oblong folio, calf binding, no imprint: the music for *The Funeral* on pp. 109–32 and for *The Lying Lover* on pp. 390–412. This book was purchased from the library of William H. Cummings (d. 1915), founder of the Purcell Society. It appears to be a complete copy of the book listed in the *Catalogue of the Sacred Harmonic Society of London* (1872), where it is described as *Theatre Music Overtures and Act Tunes by Various Composers for English Plays Produced at the End of the Seventeenth and Commencement of the Eighteenth Century* . . ., 4 vols., oblong folio (London, [c. 1700–4]). An analysis of the contents of this printed book tallies with *Play House Aires*. Music for some twenty plays is included, for two others by Croft. Aitken knew about this music and published the first treble of the score for the Overture and Scotch Aire of *The Funeral* music in *Life*, ii. 369–72, but gave no idea of the nature and extent of it. A portion of Croft's music for Steele's plays is listed in the *First Supplement* of the *Catalogue of Printed Music in the British Museum*.

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The men and women who sang the songs of *The Funeral* were well-known singers, some of whom undoubtedly were members of the Drury Lane Company. Steele would consider it a triumph to secure the virtuosos Jemmie Bowen and Mr. Pate to sing the lyrics that brought the play to a climactic close: in the printed text their names are given above the nuptial song 'On yonder bed' and the solemn, patriotic 'Arise, arise'. There may be obscurity in the facts of Pate's life, but no doubts can be held of his prestige or the merit of his performances, for example, in Henry Purcell's *Fairy Queen* or Motteux's operatic *Island Princess*. And young Bowen, in demand as 'The Boy', sang his grace notes so skilfully that he had earned the praise of the great Purcell himself. Two women singers also sang *The Funeral* songs, Mrs. Harris and Miss Campion. Of Mrs. Harris little seems to be known; her name appears on a song-sheet edition of 'Let not love' that may have served on some occasion as *entr'acte* entertainment. We know that Miss Campion had a voice of exceptional beauty and delighted her audiences from about 1702, when she sang in a revival of *The Island Princess*, to 1704, when she left the stage; and that a promising career was cut short when she died in 1706 at the age of nineteen. 'Sung by Mrs. Campion' heads a song-sheet version of 'Ye minutes bring' (assigned to the Boy); and as she was with the Company in 1703, it is not inconceivable that she stood in the wings awaiting her call at the revival of *The Funeral* on 28 May, 1 November, and 15 December of that year.

Of the four songs in *The Lying Lover*, 'Venus has left' was set by Daniel Purcell, 'Since the day' by Richard Leveridge, and 'To Celia's Spinet' by William Croft. The setting for the fourth, The rolling years', is unfortunately not to be found, nor is the omposer's name on record. The three known settings are tune-l airs to hum or to pick out on the piano, but their effective-ss would depend on a good voice and an instrumental companiment. Particularly Croft's spinet song, rich in *agré-ts* and musical frills, demanded an exhibition of virtuosity— by whom we do not know (by Mrs. Lucas?). One of the able musical features of *The Lying Lover* was the contribution le by Leveridge, singer and composer, during many decades aimed for his occasional songs and operatic roles, at this a singing member of the Company. According to Steele's ment in the printed text he sang in the first run, 'Venus

upon the studies and the pastimes, the intrigues and the scandals, the humours and the passions of those who dwelt in the high places of both state and church. Of all these writers none has contrived to blend information and entertainment more successfully than Giraldus Cambrensis. A scholar trained at Paris, an insatiably curious student of men and books and every form of odd lore, a fighter and an intriguer to his finger-tips, an inveterate gossip, yet a man capable of high ideals and far-reaching schemes of public policy, the intimate friend of kings and statesmen, popes and prelates, yet withal a passionate lover of his own native little Wales—Gerald is one of the most romantic figures in all medieval literature. The most stirring episode in his life was the struggle in which he engaged, "for the honour of Wales[1]"; and he is still deservedly beloved among his countrymen as the devoted champion of one of the most creditable of lost causes and impossible loyalties. But his enduring title to fame rests upon the writings which, alike for brilliancy of style and for variety of interest, remain unsurpassed among the Anglo-Norman literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

A greater renown, however, in literary history generally has been enjoyed by Gerald's friend, and, probably, fellow-countryman, Walter Map[2]. Were it possible to prove to demonstration Map's authorship of the great Arthurian romances commonly associated with his name, there could be no question about his claim to rank as the greatest literary genius who appeared in England before Chaucer. But the claim made on behalf of Map to the authorship of these imaginative works rests on very slender evidence. Even the authenticity of his equally celebrated Goliardic poems is open to grave question. The *De Nugis Curialium*, or book *Of Courtiers' Trifles*, is, undoubtedly, his. It was probably composed by instalments, and forms a sort of common-place book in which Map seems to have jotted down, from time to time, both shrewd reflections upon men and things, and pleasant anecdotes to divert the vacant mind. Of the strictly historical portions of the work, the most valuable are the accounts, in the first book, of some of the heretical sects which had sprung up in the twelfth century, and the reflections, which take up the whole of the fifth book, upon the character and achievements of the Anglo-Norman kings. The fourth book includes, in company with some lively tales, the celebrated letter, well known to the Wife of Bath's fifth husband, from Valerius to Rufinus, upon the folly of marrying

[1] *Op.* (*Rolls Series*), I, 129. See also *post*, chap. x, p. 196

[2] See *post*, chap. x, pp. 188 ff.

gave it a very happy vogue; and it received a left-handed compliment from one Bagley, who, without acknowledgements, altered the first line to 'Whilst in the grove Timandra walks' (and three words elsewhere) and called it 'a new song'. For his generation, Dr. Arne, like Purcell, made playhouse music of it with a score of style and finish designed for the voice of the incomparable Mrs. Clive, who must surely have sung it with archness and gaiety. For a certainty she was cast as Biddy Tipkin on 10 December 1745 and 24 November 1750. Steele's words were sung to the notes of violin, flute, and harpsichord in the London theatres; on summer evenings at Vauxhall, Marylebone, and Ranelagh; and, without doubt, by amateurs in private gatherings of friends. The Arne setting was appreciated across the Atlantic, for we know that in Philadelphia the music-loving patriot Francis Hopkinson played it on his harpsichord. The Parthenissa of this song is no relation to the swarm of conventional Celias, Chloes, and Flavias. This was the name of the foolish little romance-reading heroine, christened Bridget, who demanded of her lover to be courted as Parthenissa. His compliance is expressed in the half-tender, half-mocking verses:

I

While gentle Parthenissa walks,
And sweetly smiles, and gaily talks,
A thousand shafts around her fly,
A thousand swains unheeded die.

II

If then she labours to be seen,
With all her killing air and mien;
From so much beauty, so much art
What mortal can secure his heart?

Only one song was written for *The Conscious Lovers*, and that was ready together with its setting by John Ernest Galliard, so Steele tells us, two years before it was needed for the production in 1722. 'From place to place forlorn I go' is not exactly an essential part of the play: as he explains in the preface, where it was printed, it was designed to serve in Act II as entertainment for Indiana, but for 'want of a performer' had to be omitted and instead 'Signor Carbonelli played admirably well on the fiddle'. As the music-master summoned by Bevil Junior, he performed a sonata (the text reads), probably one of his own

1195 to 1214. John's work extended down to the year 1188, and was revised and continued by Roger down to 1235, the year before his death. Roger claims in his preface to have selected "from the books of catholic writers worthy of credit, just as flowers of various colours are gathered from various fields." Hence he called his work *Flores Historiarum*—a title appropriated in the fourteenth century to a long compilation by various hands. Begun at St Albans, and completed at Westminster, it was based upon the *Chronicle* of Matthew Paris and continued to the year 1326. The work was long ascribed to one Matthew of Westminster, but it is now known that no actual chronicler of that name ever existed. Roger of Wendover's work is, however, now valued not so much for what he culled from previous writers as for its full and lively narrative of contemporary events, from 1216 to 1235. Although in accuracy, in range and in subtlety and shrewdness of insight he falls far short of his great successor as historiographer of St Albans, Roger largely anticipates him in the fearless candour of his personal and moral judgments.

Matthew Paris became historiographer of St Albans upon the death of Roger of Wendover in 1236, and proceeded in his famous *Chronica Majora* to revise and continue the work of his predecessor. Matthew Paris's own narrative is an extraordinarily comprehensive and masterly survey of both English and continental history during almost an entire quarter of a century. We know little of the details of the historian's own life. He became a monk of St Albans in 1217, and tradition ascribes to him not only a high repute for scholarship, but the possession of varied gifts as an artist. The most notable incident in his career was his employment by the pope, in 1248, on a mission of reform to the Benedictine monks of Holm, in Norway, which kept him away from England for some eighteen months. He lived, throughout, in close intimacy with the court, and, notwithstanding his plain-spokenness, enjoyed a share of royal favour. He died in 1259. Courtier and scholar, monk and man of the world, Matthew Paris was, both by training and position, exceptionally well qualified to undertake a history of his own time. Moreover, he had the instinct, the temper and the judgment of the born historian. He took immense pains in the collection and the verification of his facts, and appears to have been in constant communication with a host of correspondents both at home and abroad. Indeed, his work reads like a stately journal of contemporary European events, where everything is marshalled in due order and proportion by a master

Attractive musical settings and celebrated singing were also important factors in their survival. But generous credit must be given to their own stamina: as songs they have individuality—and wit and charm. They are lacking in the heartiness of Tom D'Urfey's and in the sparkle of Congreve's. They do not have the polished beauty of Dryden's at his best; but on the other hand they are not marred, as are many of his, by cynicism or sensuality. While it never could be maintained that Steele was a poet, it is true that he turned a deft hand to light verse. A good word might even be said for the end-tag rhymes of his acts and scenes. But of the lack-lustre blank verse passages, all too numerous in the early comedies, perhaps the least said the better.

The concluding thought is this: even a small excursion into theatrical history reminds one that the printed pages of an early eighteenth-century English play may be more enjoyably read within the sound of the music rippling through them.

The Funeral

'Let not love on me bestow
Soft distress and tender woe' II. iii.

A Collection of the Choicest Songs and Dialogues Composed by the Most Eminent Masters of the Age, folio, J. Walsh, [*c.* 1704], p. 112. 'Set by Daniel Purcell and Sung by Mrs. Harris.' Key of C major with figured bass [for harpsichord, spinet, or bass-viol]. A short concluding passage for the flute. (Folger Library.)

Thomas D'Urfey, *Wit and Mirth: or Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1706, 1707, 1709, iv. 184–5; and in his *Songs Compleat, Pleasant, and Divertive*, 12mo, 1719–20, vi. 22–3. Purcell's setting, melody only. (Library of Congress.)

John Stafford Smith, *A Collection of Songs of Various Kinds and for Different Voices*, [177–], p. 6. 'A Chearful Glee,' set for three voices, two trebles and a bass. (Library of Congress.)

G. A. Aitken, *Life of Richard Steele*, 1889, ii. 372–4. Purcell's setting.

The words without music are found in *The Hive*, 1724, i. 201, as 'The Painful Part of Love Renounc'd'; *The Choice*, 1733, ii. 179; *The Lark*, 1740, p. 59; *The Thrush*, 1749, p. 213; *The Aviary*, [1744], p. 312; *The Warbling Muses*, 1749, p. 280; *The Charmer*, 1751, ii. 194; *The Vocal Magazine or Compleat British Songster*, 1784, no. 123; Joseph Ritson, *A Select Collection of English Songs with their Original Airs*, 1783, 1813, i. 136: with the note that 'it was set in a most labored, mechanical manner by Daniel Purcell, but his music was not thought worthy of insertion'; John Aikin, *Essays on Song-Writing with a Collection of Such English Songs as are Most Eminent for Poetical Merit*, [1772], 1810, p. 199, classified as 'a witty song'; Aikin, *Vocal Poetry*, 1810, p. 209.

'Ye minutes bring the happy hour
And Chloe blushing to the bower' IV. ii.

A Collection of the Choicest Songs and Dialogues, [*c.* 1704], p. 213 (listed but missing from the Folger copy); [*c.* 1710], p. 192. 'Set by Daniel Purcell and Sung by Mrs. Campion.' With figured bass.

reign would remain obscure, were Paris's *Chronicle* not supplemented by the monumental work of Henry of Bracton, or Bratton, on the laws of England. Bracton scarcely belongs to the chroniclers; but his writings throw sufficient light upon the social conditions of his time to entitle him to stand side by side with Matthew Paris as a contributor to the English history of the thirteenth century. Following in the footsteps of Ranulf de Glanville (or Hubert Walter), Henry II's great justiciar, Henry of Bracton compiled, some time between 1250 and 1258, an elaborate treatise on the laws and customs of England. Bracton was one of the many ecclesiastics who held high judicial office under Henry III. He was, in turn, a justice in eyre, a judge of the king's court, a Devonshire rector and archdeacon of Barnstaple. In addition to his legal treatise he left behind him a note-book, containing some two thousand cases taken from the plea rolls of his time, with comments which "to all appearance came from Bracton's hand or from Bracton's head[1]." Indebted though he was for the form and method of his great book to such foreign works as those of the celebrated Italian lawyer, Azo of Bologna, Bracton's work is, in substance, thoroughly English, and is a laborious exposition, illustrated by some hundreds of decisions, of the approved practice of the king's court in England. Bracton died in 1268, leaving his work unfinished, although he appears to have been adding to and annotating it to the very last; but, even as it stands, his treatise is not only the most authoritative English law-book of his time, but, in design and matter, "the crown and flower of English medieval jurisprudence[2]." It "both marks and makes a critical moment in the history of English law, and, therefore, in the essential history of the English people[3]."

The art of the historian proper, however, gradually began to decline after the death of Matthew Paris. Among the chroniclers who take us down to the fourteenth century there are few names worthy of a place in a history of literature. Prominent among them are Matthew's own followers at St Albans, William Rishanger and John of Trokelowe; Nicholas Trivet or Trevet, a Dominican friar, whose works are of considerable historical importance for the reign of Edward I and of additional literary interest in connection with Chaucer's *Man of Law's Tale*; Walter of Hemingburgh, a canon of the Yorkshire priory of Guisburn, who not

[1] Pollock and Maitland, *History of English Law*, ed. 1898, Vol. I, p. 207.
[2] *Ib.* p. 206.
[3] *Bracton's Note Book*, ed. Maitland, Vol. I, p. 1.

'The rolling years the joys restore
Which happy, happy Britain knew' v. iii.

In the printed play Steele labelled it 'Song by Mr. Leveridge', but no information concerning the setting or the composer has been found.

The words are given in *The Choice*, 1733, iii. 26; *The Syren*, 1735, p. 272; *The Aviary*, [1744], p. 491; *The Robin*, 1749, p. 119.

'Since the day of poor man
That little, little span' iv. iii.

The Monthly Masks of Vocal Musick, July 1707. 'A Song Set and Sung by Mr. Leveridge.' In the key of E minor, with figured bass. With an instrumental passage between stanzas for the bass and a concluding symphony 'For the flute'. (Houghton Library and Library of Congress.)

A Collection of Songs by Mr. Richard Leveridge, folio, J. Walsh, [*c.* 1723], p. 32. (In Mr. Harding's Collection.)

A Collection of Songs with the Musick by Mr. Leveridge, Engraved and Printed for the Author. With a Frontispiece Designed and Engraved by Hogarth, octavo, 1727, two vols. in one, ii. 3. 'Life a Bubble.' Treble and bass. The score differs slightly from the *Monthly Mask* music. (Boston Public Library.)

The Merry Musician or a Cure for the Spleen, J. Walsh, [*c.* 1729], p. 159. 'Life a Bubble by Mr. Leveridge.' Melody only. (Boston Public Library.)

Aitken, op. cit. ii. 377–8. The score as given in the edition of 1727.

The words are given in *The Hive*, 1732, iv. 39 as 'Life Improved' and in *The Warbling Muses*, 1749, p. 283. With five additional six-line stanzas the poem is found in *Collection of Bacchanalian Songs*, 1729, p. 14; *The Choice*, 1733, iii. 13; *The Syren*, 1735, p. 268; *The Aviary*, [1744], p. 439; *The Robin*, 1749, p. 46.

The Tender Husband

'See, Britons, see with awful eyes
Britannia from her seas arise'

This song follows the Prologue in the printed play and has the heading, 'A Song Designed for the Fourth Act, but not Set.' The only song-book reference found is in *The Choice*, 1733, iii. 23.

'With studied airs and practised smiles
Flavia my ravished heart beguiles' iii. i.

The Monthly Masks of Vocal Musick, 2 pp., May 1706. 'A Song in the Tender Husband. Sett and Sung by Mr Ramondon at the Theatre Royal.' With instrumental passages at the beginning and between stanzas for the bass; symphony at the end 'For the flute'. (Houghton Library.)

A song-sheet edition of the item described above, folio, double sheet, 2 pp., [n.d.]. (Houghton Library: Mus. 505.7 F*, sheet music.)

The words are given in *The Hive*, 1724, i. 24 under the title 'The Artful Mistress'; *The Choice*, 1733, iii. 21; *The Warbling Muses*, 1749, p. 281, where the heroine becomes Celia.

'Why, lovely charmer, tell me why
So very kind and yet so shy' iv. i.

The Monthly Masks of Vocal Musick, May 1705. 'A Song in the Tender Husband, Sung by Mr Hughes. Set by Mr. Dan: Purcell. Within the Compass of the Flute.'

CHAPTER X

ENGLISH SCHOLARS OF PARIS AND FRANCISCANS OF OXFORD

LATIN LITERATURE OF ENGLAND FROM JOHN OF SALISBURY TO RICHARD OF BURY

THE university of Paris owed its origin to the cathedral school of Notre-Dame. It was not until the time of William of Champeaux (d. 1121), that this school began to rival the scholastic fame of Chartres. Early in the thirteenth century the schools of Paris were connected with three important churches. On the Ile de la Cité there was the cathedral of Notre-Dame; to the south of the Seine, on rising ground near the site of the present Panthéon, was the collegiate church of Sainte-Geneviève; and, to the east of the walls south of the river, the church of Canons Regular at the abbey of St Victor. The schools of Notre-Dame and of Sainte-Geneviève were, successively, the scenes of the ever-memorable lectures of a famous pupil of William of Champeaux, the eloquent, brilliant, vain, impulsive and self-confident disputant, Abelard (d. 1142). The fame of his teaching made Paris the resort of large numbers of scholars, whose presence led to its becoming the home of the many Masters by whom the university was ultimately founded. The earliest trace of this university has been discovered in the passage where Matthew Paris states that his own preceptor, an abbot of St Albans, had, as a student in Paris, been admitted into "the fellowship of the elect Masters" (c. 1170)[1]. In 1136, when John of Salisbury went to Paris, the university was not yet in existence. The first recorded "town and gown" riot, that of 1200, led to the grant of a charter to the resident body of Masters; the approximate date of the first statutes, ten years later, marks the earliest recognition of the university as a legally constituted corporation, a veritable *universitas*; and, about ten years later still, the Masters of Arts were first organised into four nations, namely, the French, the Normans, the Picards and

[1] *Gesta Abbatum*, I, 217, ed. 1867.

Aitken, op. cit. ii. 378–81, Purcell setting; ii. 382–4, Arne setting.

The words without music in *The Hive*, 1724, ii. 113, as 'The Irresistable Charmer'; *The Choice*, 1733, iii. 22; *The Syren*, 1735, p. 271; *The Robin*, 1749, p. 293; *The Aviary*, [1744], p. 608; *The Warbling Muses*, 1749, p. 282, where the first line becomes 'Whilst in the grove Timandra walks'.

The Conscious Lovers

'From place to place forlorn I go
With downcast eyes a silent shade' Designed for II. ii.

The Musical Miscellany, 1729, i. 104–5. 'Sung in the Conscious Lovers.' Composer's name not given; but as it is in company with ten other songs set by Galliard and is written in a similar style, this is conjectured to be the Galliard setting. Melody only, with short concluding passage 'For the flute'.

Calliope or English Harmony, octavo, J. Simpson, [*c.* 1737–9], i. 10. 'A Song in the Conscious Lovers.' Composer's name not given. Treble and bass, in Key of G minor. Concluding passage for the flute. Headed by engraved vignette. This is a different setting from that in *Musical Miscellany*. (Boston Public Library.)

'A Song with Symphony for the Entertainment of Indiana in the Conscious Lovers', folio, double sheet, 2 pp., [n.d.]. Composer's name not given. Treble and bass. With instrumental introduction, interlude passages, and symphony at the end 'For the flute'. This is a third setting. (Julian Marshall Collection of Sheet Music: Houghton Library.)

Joseph Ritson, *A Select Collection of English Songs*, 2nd ed., 1813, words in i. 179; melody in iii. 91. Same air as in *Musical Miscellany*.

Aitken, op. cit. ii. 384–5. 'Indiana's Song, Composer not known.' Same score as in *Calliope*, and presumably that listed in *The Catalogue of Printed Music in the British Museum*, single sheet folio.

Ursula Greville, *Charming Sounds: a Volume of Early Eighteenth-Century Songs. Arranged with Pianoforte Accompaniment by Owen Mase*, folio size, 1926, p. 9. 'Words and melody anonymous.' Same air as that in *Musical Miscellany*. (Boston Public Library.)

The words are given in *The Theatre*, no. 18, 1 March 1720, by Steele: 'The Love-Sick Maid / A Song. Set by Mr. Galliard.' The text printed here differs slightly from that in the Preface of the play, printed in 1722. *The Hive*, 1724, i. 112, as 'The Bashful Virgin'; *The Cupid*, 1736, p. 21 and 1739, p. 18, where it is stated that the song can be sung to 'My goddess Celia heav'nly fair,' setting by Mr. Monro (to be seen in *Musical Miscellany*, 1730, iv. 124–5); *The Choice*, 1733, ii. 178; *The Nightingale*, 1738, p. 293; *The Musical Companion*, 1741, p. 213; *The Aviary*, [1744], p. 175; *The Linnet*, 1749, p. 378; *The Buck's Bottle Companion*, 1775, p. 13; *The Vocal Magazine*, 1784, no. 1148; Aikin, *Essays on Song-Writing*, 1810, p. 143, and *Vocal Poetry*, 1810, p. 134.

meagre lectures of Bernard's younger brother, Theodoric, who is nevertheless described as "a most studious investigator of the Arts[1]." This description was confirmed in 1888, when he was identified as the author of two large volumes containing a comprehensive *Survey of the Liberal Arts*, written in a bold and clear hand, which may now be seen in the public library of the cathedral town. It may be added that it was between 1134 and 1150, during the time when Theodoric was successively "master of the school" and chancellor, that the south doorway of the west front of the cathedral was adorned with figures of the seven arts, each of them associated with the ancient representative of that art, for example, grammar with Priscian, dialectic with Aristotle and rhetoric with Cicero.

It was probably early in 1141 that John returned to Paris. For a short time he attended, not only the lectures of Gilbert, who had lately ceased to be chancellor of Chartres, but also those of Robert Pullen, the future cardinal, who had taught at Oxford in 1133. Socially, he saw much of Adam du Petit Pont, who owed his surname to the school that he had set up on the little bridge between the Ile de la Cité and the Quartier Latin.

John of Salisbury's student life in Paris, and Chartres, and again in Paris, probably extended from early in 1136 to late in 1145. In the spring of 1148, he was present at the council of Rheims. It was there that he was introduced by Bernard of Clairvaux to Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, an introduction that had an important effect on his literary and ecclesiastical career.

About 1150 he returned to England, and resided mainly at the court of Canterbury, engaged on secretarial and diplomatic work, which frequently took him to the court of Rome. On the most celebrated of these visits, during the winter of 1155—6, his friend the English pope, Hadrian IV, sent Henry II his written authority to extend his rule over Ireland, together with an emerald ring in token of his right[2]. It was probably John of Salisbury's eager interest in the privileges of the church, while he was still in the service of Theobald, that led to his soon falling into disfavour with the king. During the enforced leisure of 1159, he revised and completed two of his most extensive works, finishing *Policraticus* shortly before, and *Metalogicus* immediately after, the death of Hadrian IV (31 August 1159). Both of these were dedicated to Becket, the warlike chancellor, with whose Henry II was then "fulminating" at the siege of Toulouse[3]. W

[1] *Metalogicus*, I, 5. [2] *Ib.* IV, 42. [3] *Policraticus*, VIII, 2

The *Rural Sports* are 'never contemptible, nor ever excellent'; *Trivia* may be allowed 'all that it claims'; the minor poems are 'neither much esteemed, nor totally despised'.[1] In the end Johnson leaves his readers with the impression that if they skip Gay altogether they will not be missing much. Two years later Joseph Warton dismisses him in much the same style: 'He wrote with neatness and terseness, *aequali quadam mediocritate*, but certainly without any elevation.'[2]

It must be added that Gay's own friends rarely asserted his claims as a poet. They thought of him, and when he was dead they remembered him, as a man—gentle, good-natured, indolent, lovable in the extreme, shiftless, impracticable, innocent, volatile, a sort of Augustan Peter Pan riding in the coaches of his noble friends, dining at their tables, shooting their pheasants, but quite incapable of attending to his worldly affairs. They all loved him, and they all looked after him; he was a sort of joint responsibility, and he repaid them by his wit and geniality and by his unselfish interest in their own concerns. Swift in particular tried to instil into Gay some of his own sense of husbandry and responsibility. He urged his friend to take more exercise, and to plan some big work that would take several years to write; he should think of laying up something for his old age. And Gay really tried—as an undergraduate will try to please his tutor. 'I remember your prescription,' he tells Swift, 'and I do ride upon the Downs, and at present I have no asthma.' Or again: 'I find myself dispirited for want of having some pursuit. . . . If you would advise the Duchess to confine me four hours a day to my own room, while I am in the country, I will write; for I cannot confine myself as I ought.'[3] No wonder Swift complained on one occasion to Pope:

> I suppose Mr. Gay will return from the Bath with twenty pounds more flesh, and two hundred less in money. Providence never designed him to be above two-and-twenty, by his thoughtlessness and cullibility. He has as little foresight of age, sickness, poverty, or loss of admirers, as a girl at fifteen.[4]

Spiritually, indeed, Gay did remain about two-and-twenty all his life, and in the rather too-adult eighteenth century that is

[1] Samuel Johnson, *Lives of the English Poets*, ed. G. B. Hill (1905), ii. 282–4.
[2] Joseph Warton, *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope* (1782), ii. 314.
[3] *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D.D.*, ed. F. E. Ball (1913), iv. 134, 173, 272, 286, 294.
[4] Ibid. 39.

is suggestive of a satire on the vanities of courtiers, followed by a set treatise on morals; but the latter half deals with the principles of government, and with matters of philosophy and learning, interspersed with many digressions. It is, in fact, an "encyclopaedia of miscellanies," reflecting the cultivated thought of the middle of the twelfth century. It includes an interesting chapter on Aristotle[1], and a satirical account of the scholastic controversies of the age.

Metalogicus, in four books, contains a defence of the method and use of logic, vindicating the claims of "grammar," and pleading for an intelligent study of logic. It includes an analysis of the whole series of Aristotle's treatises on that subject, being, in fact, the earliest work in the Middle Ages in which every part of *Organon* is turned to account.

Historia Pontificalis is only preserved in an incomplete form in a single manuscript at Bern; it was not printed until 1868, and was not identified as the work of John of Salisbury until 1873. It gives an account of the ecclesiastical history of the years 1148 to 1152, but is really as much a satire as a history.

In his attitude towards the ancient classics, John of Salisbury is far from regarding Aristotle as infallible; he is opposed to Plato, though he is fully conscious of Plato's greatness. His favourite author is Cicero, and the purity of his own Latin prose has been justly praised. Caesar and Tacitus he knows solely by name; but, in all the literature accessible to him, he is obviously the best-read scholar of his time. A humanist two centuries in advance of his age, he is eager to give the widest possible interpretation to "whatsoever things were written aforetime for our learning"[2].

In his day the first period in the medieval study of logic was drawing towards its close, and with the degenerate type of the professional dialectician he has no sympathy. The earliest of all the medieval theories on the nature and the functions of the state is due to John of Salisbury. He is the first of modern writers on the philosophy of politics, and he founds his own theory on the records of the Old Testament and on the annals of the ancient Roman empire.

As a representative of literature and learning, Peter of Blois is only a pale reflection of John of Salisbury. Born at Blois, he was probably educated at Tours; he learnt and taught at Bologna and Paris, settled in England about [illegible] as [illegible]

[1] vii, 6.

[2] Cf. prologue to [illegible]

more often than we are apt to believe, on the impression made by his personality, and not solely on what he wrote. It is notorious that Matthew Arnold, who warned us against this very error, went on to commit it himself in his estimates of Byron, of Shelley, of Keats; and with reputations less secure than those, some weakness or ineffectiveness of character may lead to the partial or total neglect of a reputable author.[1] Of Gay it may perhaps be said that while his attractive and unassertive character has to some slight extent helped to keep his memory alive, it has tended at the same time to blur his achievement as a poet. The habit among critics of patronizing Gay, of not taking him quite seriously *as a man*, has spread to his poetry. When Johnson wrote of him that he had not in any degree 'the *mens divinior*, the dignity of genius',[2] we may perhaps suspect that the judgement is partly due to the impression made by Gay the man, who had not, in Johnson's opinion, 'the character of a hero'.[3] It is true enough ('it would be idle to pretend') that Gay is the wrong man to go to if you are looking for the *mens divinior* in its most pronounced degree. But how much of it would you find in Horace, in Herrick, in Cowper, in Lamartine? Does the '*mens divinior*, the dignity of genius' turn out to be something, like Arnold's 'grand style', that helps us to a qualitative rather than a quantitative distinction?

The only way to do Gay justice is to accept his poetry on its own terms. If we look to him for 'a criticism of life', or expect to find in his poetry a substitute for religion, we shall look for what he is hardly ever concerned to give. His poetry bears about as much relation to contemporary eighteenth-century life as a Victorian sampler bears to the flowers and trees and cottages that it reproduces in bright needlework. Gay did not run away from life; he accepted it as his point of departure. In the medium of poetry he did what had long been familiar in the medium of pottery—he produced *objets d'art*, delicate, formalized, artificial, glazed and polished by his poetic diction, and removed from actuality by a process of refining and idealizing

[1] Who would guess from the histories of literature that *The Duke of Lerma* is almost the finest English tragedy written in the second half of the seventeenth century? But the author, Sir Robert Howard, appears to have been a pompous ass, and was generally recognized and satirized as such by his contemporaries. The character of the man prejudiced the reputation of his tragedy, and though his character is now as little known as his play the harm had been done.

[2] *Lives*, ed. cit. ii. 282.

[3] Ibid. 272.

Giraldus published the second edition of his *Conquest of Ireland*[1], Walter Map was no longer living.

Map was the author of an entertaining miscellany in Latin prose, *De Nugis Curialium*, a work in a far lighter vein than that of John of Salisbury, who had adopted this as an alternative title of his *Policraticus*. But, even in this lighter vein, Map has often a grave moral purpose. Stories of the follies and crimes of courts, and a lament over the fall of Jerusalem, are here followed by an account of the origin of the Carthusians, the Templars and the Hospitallers, with reflections on their growing corruption, and a violent attack on the Cistercians, together with notices of heretics and of hermits. In the second book, we have anecdotes of the Welsh, with a collection of fairy-tales; in the third, a series of highly romantic stories; in the fourth, the "Epistle of Valerius dissuading from marriage the philosopher Rufinus" (sometimes erroneously ascribed to St Jerome); and, in the fifth, an invaluable sketch of the history of the English court from William Rufus to Henry II. Walter Map's "courtly jests" are mentioned by Giraldus Cambrensis, who, in his latest work, describes Map as a person of distinction, endued with literary skill and with the wit of a courtier, and as having spent his youth (and more than his youth) in reading and writing poetry[2]. Giraldus sends his friend a set of Latin elegiacs, with a present of a walking-stick, and he has fortunately preserved the twelve lines of his friend's reply in the same metre[3]. This reply is almost the only certainly genuine product of Map's muse that has survived. Of his poems against the Cistercian monks, only a single line is left: *Lancea Longini, grex albus, ordo nefandus*[4]. His notorious antipathy to the Cistercian order has led to his being regarded as the author of another poem entitled *Discipulus Goliae episcopi de grisis monachis*[5]. The worldly, and worse than worldly, bishop Golias is the theme of other poems, in accentual riming metres, ascribed to Map, notably the *Apocalypse*, the *Confession* and the *Metamorphosis* of Golias. The *Apocalypse* is first assigned to him in a Bodleian manuscript of the fourteenth century. Here there is no attempt to dramatise the character of Golias; we have simply an apocalyptic vision of the corruptions of the church set forth in 110 riming quatrains of accentual dactyls in lines of the type: *Omnis a clericis fluit enormitas.* In the accentual trochaics of the *Confession*, the bishop is dramatically represented as remembering "the tavern that he has never scorned, nor ever will scorn until the angels sing his

[1] v, 410. [2] iv, 140. [3] i, 363. [4] *Latin Poems*, p. xxxv. [5] *Ib.* p. 54.

Then Chelsea's meads o'erhear perfidious vows,
And the prest grass defrauds the grazing cows.[1]

The two last lines are pure Gay; they have his own special note of delicate absurdity and sophisticated mockery. But the whole passage is characteristic of his habit of refining the raw materials of life. In *Rural Sports* he explains to the angler in georgic fashion how to clean the worms he is going to use as bait:

Cleanse them from filth, to give a tempting gloss,
Cherish the sully'd reptile race with moss;
Amid the verdant bed they twine, they toil,
And from their bodies wipe their native soil.[2]

Gay submits contemporary life to this same self-cleaning process until it shines with a delicate and not quite earthly lustre. The actual, the real, are of interest to this poet mainly because they enable him, as in *The Shepherd's Week* and *Trivia*, to obtain a kind of contrapuntal effect with the artificiality of his glossy diction and the orderliness of his balanced rhythm. The gently deliberate contrast comes out in *Trivia*:

When all the Mall in leafy ruin lies,
And damsels first renew their oyster cries . . .[3]

or in *The Shepherd's Week*:

Lost in the musick of the whirling flail,
To gaze on thee I left the smoaking pail . . .[4]

or, again in *Trivia*:

When on his box the nodding coachman snores,
And dreams of fancy'd fares . . .[5]

or finally, in a winter scene in the streets of London:

On silent wheel the passing coaches roll;
Oft' look behind, and ward the threatning pole.
In harden'd orbs the school-boy moulds the snow,
To mark the coachman with a dext'rous throw.
Why do ye, boys, the kennel's surface spread,
To tempt with faithless pass the matron's tread?
How can ye laugh to see the damsel spurn,
Sink in your frauds, and her green stockings mourn?

[1] 'An Epistle to the Right Honourable William Pulteney, Esq.', 101 ff.
[2] Op. cit. i. 167 ff.
[3] Op. cit. i. 27 f.
[4] Op. cit. 'Tuesday', 57 f.
[5] Op. cit. i. 153 f.

man who knows the art of lying; Walter Map knows well his part of it"[1]. Such is the evidence, slight as it is, for ascribing to Map any share in the great cycle of romance surveyed in other chapters[2]. We have already seen that there is very little reason for accepting him as the author of any part of the large body of accentual Latin poetry which passes under his name. The only thirteen lines of Latin verse which are certainly genuine products of his pen are written in hexameters and pentameters of the strictly classical type.

A century before the time of Map, Godfrey, a native of Cambrai, and prior of St Swithin's, Winchester (d. 1107), had written Latin epigrams after the manner of Martial. He is, in fact, repeatedly quoted as "Marcial" by Gower. The 238 ordinary epigrams of his first book are followed by nineteen others, which have a historic interest, in so far as they refer to royal or ecclesiastical persons of the day. The Anglo-Norman poet Reginald, a monk of St Augustine's, Canterbury (*fl.* 1112), wrote a lengthy poem in leonine hexameters on the life of the Syrian hermit St Malchus. In the next half-century, Lawrence, the Benedictine monk who became prior and bishop of Durham (d. 1154), composed a popular summary of Scripture history in nine books of elegiac verse. Henry of Huntingdon (d. 1155) has preserved, in the eleventh book of his *Historia Anglorum*, the Latin epigrams and other minor poems that he had learnt to compose as a pupil of the monks of Ramsey. A little later, Hilarius, who is supposed to have been an Englishman, and was a pupil of Abelard about 1125, wrote in France three Latin plays on sacred themes, the earliest of their kind. The "raising of Lazarus" and the "image of St Nicholas" are partly written in French; the "story of Daniel," in Latin only. He is also the author of twelve interesting sets of riming lyrics, in Latin interspersed with a few lines of French, the most graceful poem in the series being addressed to an English maiden bearing the name of Rose. About the same time the Cistercian monk, Henry of Saltrey (*fl.* 1150), wrote a Latin prose version of the legend of the *Purgatory of St Patrick*. A life of Becket, now only known through the Icelandic *Thomas Saga*, was written by Robert of Cricklade, chancellor of Oxford (1159) and prior of St Frideswide's, who dedicated to Henry II his nine books of *Flores* from the *Natural History* of the elder Pliny.

[1] H. L. D Ward's *Catalogue of Romances*, I, 734—41.

[2] See especially *post*, Chapter XII.

to bring them together in this way, the sophisticated and the natural. When a rainstorm threatens,

> The bookseller, whose shop 's an open square,
> Foresees the tempest, and with early care
> Of learning strips the rails. . . .[1]

Again the delicate contrast: the books in the street, the rain on the books. An umbrella is perhaps the perfect symbol for the world of Gay's peculiar, half-mocking vision; an umbrella that 'guards from chilly show'rs the walking maid', faintly absurd in itself, an apparatus devised by civilized man and yet spread out in the face of a hostile nature.

This contrast between the natural and the artificial runs through all Gay's work. Sometimes it is emphasized, as when he notes how

> On doors the sallow milk-maid chalks her gains;
> Ah! how unlike the milkmaid of the plains![2]

Sometimes it is only implied, as when he goes on to remark upon the ass's milk which was prescribed by physicians for 'the love-sick maid' and 'dwindling beau' (even here the contrast is implicit), and which was brought to the invalid not in milk-pails but in the still-unmilked ass herself:

> Before proud gates attending asses bray,
> Or arrogate with solemn pace the way. . . .[3]

It was, we may be sure, the odd solemnity of those patient animals picking their way over the London cobblestones that caught and held Gay's attention. With Gay we have at last reached a genuinely urban civilization (a state of affairs so frequently and so superfluously deplored by critics of a romantic turn), and we can recognize in him the town-dweller's delighted interest in such manifestations of natural life as come his way—the cat caught in a tree and rescued by the fire brigade, the pigeons in Trafalgar Square (citizens of a smaller growth), the well-groomed greys at a royal wedding.

Aware of this contrast between the natural and the artificial, Gay is constantly modifying the one by the other: the natural becomes artificial, and the artificial natural. But Gay's tendency is always, if not actually to idealize, to soften and harmonize.

[1] *Trivia*, i. 161 ff. [2] Ibid. ii. 11 f. [3] Ibid. 13 f.

order of his own. Meeting Galen once more, he begins discussing the state of the church and the general condition of society, and urges Galen to join his new order, when, suddenly, his old master, Bernard, appears on the scene, and compels him to return to his first allegiance as an ordinary monk. Chaucer, in *The Nonne Preestes Tale*, recalls one of the stories he had "rad in daun Burnel the Asse[1]."

The *Architrenius* or "Arch-Mourner" of the Norman satirist, Jean de Hauteville (*fl.* 1184), who was born near Rouen and passed part of his life in England, has only a slight connection with our present subject. The pilgrim of that satire pays a visit to Paris, and describes the hardships of the students and the fruitlessness of their studies; he afterwards arrives at the hill of Presumption, which is the haunt of all manner of monks and ecclesiastics, as well as the great scholastic doctors and professors. The seven liberal arts are elaborately described in the *Anti-Claudianus* of the Universal Doctor, Alain de Lille (1114—1203). This fine poem, and the mingled prose and verse of *De Planctu Naturae*, were familiar to Chaucer. Alain probably passed some time in England with the Cistercians at Waverley in Surrey (1128), and he is the reputed author of a commentary on the prophecies of Merlin.

Alain's contemporary, Geoffrey de Vinsauf (*fl.* 1200), who was educated at St Frideswide's, Oxford, and travelled in France and Italy, dedicated to Innocent III his *Poëtria Nova*, an *Art of Poetry* founded partly on Horace, and recommending the ancient metres in preference to the modern rimes, with examples of the various kinds of composition. In the same period, Alexander Neckam, of St Albans, distinguished himself in Paris in 1180, and, late in life, became abbot of Cirencester. He is the author of an amusing treatise *De Naturis Rerum*, with many anecdotes of animals, and with an attack on the method of teaching logic in the university of Paris. In his lengthy elegiac poem *De Laudibus Divinae Sapientiae* he traverses much of the same ground. He further describes the chief seats of learning in his day, summing up in a single couplet the four faculties in the university of Paris, the *paradisus deliciarum*:

Hic florent artes; coelestis pagina regnat;
Stant leges; lucet jus; medicina viget[2].

Joannes de Garlandia, who studied at Oxford and Paris (1204),

[1] *Canterbury Tales*, 15318.
[2] p. 453 ed. Wright, in *Rolls Series*, 1863.

She plays familiar in his arms,
And ev'ry soldier hath his charms;
From tent to tent she spreads her flame:
For custom conquers fear and shame.

So far as Gay's moral purpose is concerned, it could not have been much less if he had been illustrating the behaviour of stags by that of country wenches. What concerns him here, as always, is the polished and precise statement, the nice conduct of a critical intelligence, and the urbane cultivation of a literary 'kind'.

If Gay was not an earnest moralist, neither was he a determined satirist. We may suspect that his satirical tone was acquired mainly from living among satirists in a satirical age. We can see him occasionally in his letters working himself up to a fashionable indignation with the age in which he lives, but there is no conviction in his protests. When in his verse he attempts the mode of Juvenal, he is 'a little o'erparted'; his indignation is no more than what he thinks the occasion requires, not what he really feels or has ever had much occasion to feel. Of this kind are some lines on the Parisian dames:

This next the spoils of fifty lovers wears,
Rich Dandin's brilliant favours grace her ears;
The necklace Florio's gen'rous flame bestow'd,
Clitander's sparkling gems her finger load;
But now, her charms grown cheap by constant use,
She sins for scarfs, clock'd stockings, knots, and shoes.
This next, with sober gait and serious leer,
Wearies her knees with morn and ev'ning prayer;
She scorns th'ignoble love of feeble pages,
But with three Abbots in one night engages. . .[1]

Gay knew about as much of such things as a precocious schoolboy; he is right out of his element here. He was happy enough bringing down the Duke of Queensberry's partridges; he had no experience of hunting the more dangerous creatures of the woods or of eighteenth-century society. There is one poem, however, 'The Birth of the Squire', in which his satire takes on a deeper tone. It begins quietly enough:

Hark! the bells ring; along the distant grounds
The driving gales convey the swelling sounds;

[1] *An Epistle to the Right Honourable William Pulteney, Esq.*, 167 ff.

Gerald stayed till Easter, 1186, collecting materials for his two works on Ireland. The *Topography* was completed in 1188. In the following year, he resolved on reciting it publicly at Oxford, "where the most learned and famous of the English clergy were then to be found." He read one of the three divisions of the work on each of three successive days. "On the first [he informs us] he received and entertained at his lodgings all the poor of the town; on the next, all the doctors of the different faculties, and such of their pupils as were of fame and note; and, on the third, the rest of the scholars with the soldiers and the townsmen." He complacently assures us that "it was a costly and a noble act; a revival of the bygone ages of poetry"; and (he proudly adds) "neither present nor past time could furnish any record of such a solemnity having ever taken place in England[1]."

Meanwhile in 1188, Baldwin, archbishop of Canterbury, had been sent to Wales to preach the coming crusade. Riding in full armour at the head of the procession, with the white cross gleaming on his breastplate, he was accompanied by Ranulf de Glanville, chief justiciar of England, and attended by a young man of slender figure, delicate features and beetling eyebrows, a man of learning and wit, and with no small share of self-conceit, "the leader of the clergy of St David's, the scion of the blood-royal of Wales." The archbishop's exhortations produced little effect on the common people, until he prompted Gerald to take up the preaching. At Haverford, Gerald discoursed in Latin and also in French. Although the crowd understood neither language, they were moved to tears by the magic of his eloquence, and no less than two hundred joined the standard of the cross[2]. It was pleasantly remarked soon afterwards that, if Gerald had only discoursed in Welsh, not a single soldier would have failed to follow that banner. Three thousand recruits were enrolled; the archbishop and the chief justiciar had taken the cross at Radnor; both of them kept their vow and died in 1190 in the course of the crusade. Gerald, meanwhile, had been appointed to write its history in Latin prose, and the archbishop's nephew, Joseph of Exeter, to write it in verse. Joseph had already composed an epic on the Trojan war, England's solitary Latin epic, which was long attributed to Cornelius Nepos, notwithstanding its dedication to the archbishop of Canterbury. He celebrated the crusade in his *Antiocheis*, now represented by a solitary fragment on the *Flos Regum Arthurus*. Gerald, however, neither went on the

[1] i, pp. xlvi, 72 f. [2] i, pp. xlix, 76.

his readers. 'Tone' is something of which any sensitive reader of Pope or Gay or Johnson is subconsciously aware (it is an element in the poetical experience that is peculiarly relevant to eighteenth-century poetry) but which, for lack of a critical vocabulary or any accepted means of measuring it, is usually passed over in silence.[1] Gay's tone varies, of course, from poem to poem; but he is almost everywhere in polite touch with his reader, walking slightly ahead of him to point out this object or that, dwelling with his habitual mock-seriousness on some homely detail; adding a touch of humorous exaggeration or picturesque embellishment to some familiar appearance. In 'A Journey to Exeter', for instance, where he is addressing himself to the Earl of Burlington, he has nothing very remarkable to tell, but the poem is a minor triumph of the politely familiar mode. And once again Gay manages to transform the ordinary into that something more delicate and remote that is his most characteristic achievement. He contrives even to throw this 'unbought grace' of style over the very meals he ate on his journey. At Stockbridge—

O'er our parch'd tongue the rich metheglin glides,
And the red dainty trout our knife divides. . . .

and, at Bridport:

On unadulterate wine we here regale,
And strip the lobster of his scarlet mail.[2]

On both occasions the gross act of feeding has taken on something of the precision and formality of an anatomical dissection: the heroic couplet alone would have seen to that. Yet quite

[1] But not by Mr. I. A. Richards, who has some admirable remarks on Gray's attitude to the reader of the *Elegy*, and who concludes: 'Indeed, many of the secrets of "style" could, I believe, be shown to be matters of tone, of the perfect recognition of the writer's relation to the reader in view of what is being said and their joint feelings about it' (*Practical Criticism* (London, 1929), pp. 206–7). One might have expected Mr. Richards's preoccupation with theory to interfere with his response to the individual work of art; but he has remained the perfect reader, and his ability to draw from a poem all that is there, and no more, gives authority to his criticism, and should procure a willing suspension of disbelief for his theory.

[2] Op. cit. 49–50, 99–100. 'Unadulterate' is a good example of Gay's keeping in touch with his reader, and appealing to his past experience. At the time (1715) when Gay wrote this poem, complaints about the adulteration of wine by vintners were frequent. (See, for example, *Brooke and Hellier: a Satyr*, 1712.) Gay's reference to the adulteration of wines would arouse the same ready response as a reference to whalemeat or snoek in the England of 1949.

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a school of criticism at Cambridge,[1] seems to arise from a disproportionate emphasis on values: the critic who is preoccupied with the question of values is in danger of discounting any writer who has not got an impressive balance at the bank. With such a critic the best becomes too great an enemy to the good; but to neglect or denigrate the good because it is not the best is to leave the best in an unnatural and misleading isolation, and to make poor use of the great resources of English poetry. 'Shine, Poet! in thy place, and be content.' The attitude of Wordsworth to the minor poet is generous and reasonable:

> The stars pre-eminent in magnitude,
> And they that from the zenith dart their beams . . .
> Are yet of no diviner origin,
> No purer essence than the one that burns
> Like an untended watch-fire on the ridge
> Of some dark mountain; or than those which seem
> Humbly to hang, like twinkling winter lamps,
> Among the branches of the leafless trees.
> All are the undying offspring of one Sire:
> Then, to the measure of the light vouchsafed,
> Shine, Poet! in thy place, and be content.

Shine, Critic, too, in thy place, and be content. And one part of the critic's function, when he is not just pontificating, or effecting the dislodgement of Milton, or Shelley, or whoever else owing to some change in the intellectual climate may have gone temporarily out of fashion, is to act, more humbly and usefully, as a sort of caretaker for literary reputations. In this capacity he can at least open the front door for visitors, see that the rooms are kept dusted and ventilated, and, if need be, comment on the exhibits if any visitors arrive. Such employment is not spectacular, but it is honourable; it expresses the relative importance of the critic and the creative writer, and it keeps the critic in the place that heaven has assigned for him.

[1] Cambridge, Eng., not Mass.

with quotations from Ovid and Caesar. Towards the close the author cites the ominous Irish prophecy that "scarcely before the Day of Judgment will Ireland be wholly subdued by the English[1]."

The *Itinerary of Wales* takes us on a tour of one month in the South, and only eight days in the North. Apart from its topographical and ecclesiastical interest, it introduces us to Gerald as a student of languages. He tells us of a priest, who, in his boyhood, paid a visit to fairy-land, and learnt the language, which proved to be akin to Greek; and he gives us one or two specimens in the words for "salt" and "water," adding the equivalents in Welsh, English, Irish, German and French[2]. It was this passage that once prompted Freeman to call Gerald the "father of comparative philology[3]." In his own Latin, Gerald has no hesitation in using *werra* for "war," and *knipulus* for "pen-knife[4]." At Cardiff, we incidentally learn that Henry II understood English, but could not speak it[5]. In the South, our attention is drawn to the vestiges of Roman splendour at Caerleon on Usk, and to the old Roman walls at Carmarthen.

The companion volume, called the *Description of Wales*, appeared in two editions (1194, 1215). The author patriotically ascribes to his fellow-countrymen a keenness of intellect that enables them to excel in whatever study they pursue. He extols their set speeches and their songs. He also quotes examples of alliteration in Latin and Welsh. The following are the specimens he selects from the English of his day: "god is to-gedere gamen and wisdom" (it is good to be merry and wise); "ne halt nocht al sor isaid, ne al sorghe atwite" (it boots not to tell every woe, nor to upbraid every sorrow); "betere is red thene rap, and liste thene lither streingthe" (better is counsel than haste, and tact than vicious strength)[6]. Elsewhere he tells the story of the Englishwoman, who, with her mistress, had for a complete year attended daily mass, at which the priest had (besides the oft-repeated *Oremus*) always used the introit *Rorate coeli, desuper*; on finding that her mistress had, nevertheless, been disappointed in her desires, she indignantly said to the priest: "rorisse þe rorie ne wrthe nan" (your *rories* and *ories* are all to no purpose)[7]. He also quotes the phrase, "God holde þe, cuning" (God save thee, king), and the refrain of a love-song, "swete lemman, dhin are" (sweet mistress, thy favour!)[8]. He notes that the language of North

[1] v, 385. [2] vi, 77.
[3] *Norman Conquest*, v, 579; cf. *Comparative Politics*, 486. [4] ii, 292.
[5] vi, 64 f. [6] vi, 188. [7] ii, 129. [8] vi, 64, ii, 120; cf. iv, 209.

and climate, moves like another Rome towards imperial power. Addison's lines are closely imitated by the author of *Liberty. A Poem* (1705), who shows interest in Italian architecture, painting, and music, only to add austerely:

> We envy not such Arts, but boast our own,
> Our *Learning* and our *Law*. (p. 8.)

As we come to Thomson's generation, we find George Lyttelton moved in France by 'the spirit of Whiggism', while he predicts that 'it will still encrease when I come into Italy, where the oppression is more sensible in its effects, and where the finest country in the world is quite depopulated by it'.[1] His *Epistle to Pope* written from Italy echoes Addison and urges the poet to sing of English liberty:

> sing the Land, which now alone can boast
> That Liberty unhappy Rome has lost.

In Thomson's own work, we find Whig liberty prominent in the early versions of *Winter* and *Summer*—the Plutarchan catalogue of Roman worthies in *Winter*, the retreat of Cato and the catalogue of British worthies in *Summer*—and also in *Sophonisba* (1730), echoing Addison's *Cato*. In *Britannia* (1729) we already have a transition from the general dogma of liberty to specific political comment, and the passages on the Jail Committee and the promotion of Scottish industries added to *Winter* in 1730 may also be described as timely editorials. The descriptive travel poem which his tour might be expected to inspire would inevitably embody political sentiments, though his earliest references to such a project emphasize description:

> There are scarce any travellers to be met with, who have given a *landscape* of the countries through which they have travelled; that have seen (as you express it) with the *Muse*'s eye; though that is the first thing that strikes me, and what all readers and travellers in the first place demand. It seems to me, that such a *poetical* landscape of countries, mixed with moral observations on their governments and people, would not be an ill-judged undertaking. But then, the description of the different face of Nature, in different countries, must be particularly marked and characteristic, the *Portrait-painting of Nature*.[2]

[1] Letter of 16 Oct. 1729 (quoted by Rose Mary Davis, *The Good Lord Lyttelton* (Bethlehem, 1939)), pp. 24–5.

[2] William Seward, *Supplement to the Anecdotes of Some Distinguished Persons* (London, 1797), pp. 139–40. To George Dodington, Paris, 27 Dec. 1730.

his stay at Lincoln in 1196—8. His *Collection of Extracts* from his own works was, naturally, compiled late in life. Among his *Epistles* is one urging Richard I to befriend men of letters, "without whom all his glory would soon pass away[1]." His latest work, the *Mirror of the Church*, depicts the principal monastic orders of the time in violent language that, not unnaturally, led the monastic copyists to neglect transcribing, and thus preserving, the author's writings. The only MS of this particular work that has survived suffered severely in a fire in the Cottonian library; but the sketch of the state of learning with which it opens had, happily, already been partly transcribed by Anthony Wood. In the last book Gerald adds a description of the churches in Rome, and closes his writings with an impressive picture of the day of doom.

To the end of his life Gerald remained true to his early devotion to literature; and he hopefully looked forward to the appreciation of posterity[2]. Freeman, in estimating the historical value of his writings, justly characterises him as "vain, garrulous" and "careless as to minute accuracy," but as also "one of the most learned men of a learned age," "one who, whatever we may say as to the soundness of his judgment, came behind few in the sharpness of his wits," "one who looked with a keen, if not an impartial, eye on all the events and controversies of his own time."[3]

Among "English" students at Paris we may briefly mention Michael Scot, who, probably before 1209, learnt Arabic at Palermo, where he lived at the brilliant court of Frederick II, to whom he dedicated three of his earliest works. Leaving Palermo for Toledo about 1209, he there completed a Latin rendering of two Arabic abstracts of Aristotle's *History of Animals*. In 1223, he returned to Palermo. He was highly esteemed as a physician and an astrologer, and his reputed skill in magic has been celebrated by Dante, Boccaccio and Sir Walter Scott. He is described by Roger Bacon as introducing to the scholars of the west certain of the physical and metaphysical works of Aristotle, with the commentators on the same[4]. He may have visited Bologna and Paris for this purpose about 1232. He probably died before 1235, and tradition places his burial, as well as his birth, in the Lowlands of Scotland.

There is no evidence that Michael Scot was ever a student at Oxford. Like Cardinal Curson of Kedleston (d. 1218), and Alexander of Hales (d. 1245), and the able mathematician,

[1] i, 243. [2] v, 212, 411; vi, 7. [3] vii, p. lii.
[4] *Opus Majus*, iii, 66, Bridges.

short, all Learning absorb'd into the Sink of hireling scurrilous News-Papers.

For whence is it, save the Want of Taste, that the continual Tides of Riches, pour'd in upon this Nation by Commerce, have been lost again in a Gulph of ungraceful, inelegant, inglorious Luxury? But whence, you will say, this want of Taste? Whence this sordid Turn to cautious Time-serving, Money-making, sneaking Prudence, instead of regardless, unfetter'd Virtue? To private Jobs, instead of public Works? To profitable, instead of fine Arts? To Gain, instead of Glory? In a Word, to the whole venal System of modern Administration? And to those gross perishing Luxuries, that reconcile, at once, Avarice and Profusion, centering all in Self, and even in the meanest, the material Part of Self.[1]

The shift of emphasis in Thomson is clear. The Briton on the grand tour viewed the monuments of history and art with frequent reference to British freedom. But such themes might be used to point a contrast not only between continental tyranny and British freedom, but between true constitutional government in Britain and the political degeneration that came from jobbery and corruption. This pattern of ideas was taken up by the opponents of Walpole. Thus Thomas Gordon and John Trenchard, in the series called 'Cato's Letters' published in the *London Journal* in 1721–2, had directed against Walpole the familiar thesis that 'all Civil Virtue and Happiness, every moral Excellency, all Politeness, all good Arts and Sciences, are produced by Liberty; and all Wickedness, Baseness, and Misery, are immediately and necessarily produced by Tyranny'. In the following number the writer says he has shown that 'Population, Riches, true Religion, Virtue, Magnanimity, Arts, Sciences and Learning, are the necessary Effects, and Productions of Liberty; and shall spend this Paper, in proving that an extensive Trade, Navigation, and Naval Power, entirely flow from the same Source'.[2] Frequent historical allusions claim all Greek and Roman culture as the effect of liberty, and belittle the age of Louis XIV. The distinction between Whig and Tory is irrelevant; all that counts is devotion to liberty. Walpole soon took over the *London Journal* and Gordon withdrew from active controversy, though he still expounded such doctrines in the discourses prefixed to his translation of Tacitus (1728–31). But

[1] *A Collection of Letters Written to the Late Aaron Hill* (London, 1751), pp. 72–5. To Hill, 23 Aug. 1735, 11 May 1736.

[2] Repr. 1733, ii. 257, 266.

Alexander of Hales, a native of Gloucestershire, studied in Paris at a time when the *Physics* and *Metaphysics* were not yet translated into Latin, and, also, later, when their study had been expressly prohibited (1215). This prohibition lasted until the dispersion of the university in 1229; and (although he may have been lecturer to the Franciscans at an earlier date) it was not until the return of the university in 1231 that he actually joined the order. As one of the leading teachers in Paris, he had a distinguished career. In his scholastic teaching he was an exponent of realism. He was entrusted by Innocent IV with the duty of preparing a comprehensive *Summa Theologiae*; and the ponderous work, which remained unfinished at his death in 1245, was completed by his pupils seven years later. In its general plan it follows the method of Peter Lombard, being one of the earliest comments on the Master of the Sentences. It was examined and approved by seventy divines, and the author became known as the Irrefragable Doctor; but a still greater Franciscan, Roger Bacon, who describes the vast work as *tamquam pondus unius equi*, declares that it was behind the times in matters of natural science, and was already being neglected, even by members of the author's own order[1]. The MS of Alexander's *Exposition of the Apocalypse*, in the Cambridge University Library, includes a portrait of the author, who is represented as reverently kneeling in the habit of a Franciscan friar[2].

St Francis himself regarded with suspicion the learning of his age. He preferred to have his followers poor in heart and understanding, as well as in their dress and their other belongings. Perfect poverty was, however, obviously incompatible with the purchase of books. A provincial minister of the order, who happened to possess books of considerable value, was not allowed to retain them. In the same spirit, on hearing that a great doctor in Paris had entered the order, St Francis said to his followers: "I am afraid, my sons, that such doctors will be the destruction of my vineyard." The preaching of the Franciscans among the common people owed its force less to their learning than to their practical experience. Their care for the sick, and even for the leper, gave a new impulse to medical and physical and experimental science; and they gradually devoted themselves to a more scientific study of theology. In their schools the student was expected to take notes and to reproduce them in the form of a

[1] *Opus Minus*, 326 f.

[2] Reproduced in J. R. Green's *Short History*, ill. ed. p. 287.

on familiar ground. The contrast between social love and self-love lay ready to hand:

> The Excellent ones of the Earth, in the Exercise of Social Love, feel it as much to be an original Impulse, as the low World that blind Affection, they bear themselves; nor are they, in the least, conscious of that forc'd, cold Reasoning by which it is deduc'd from so mean an Original.
>
> How many deathless Heroes, Patriots, and Martyrs, have been so gloriously concern'd for the Good of Mankind, and so strongly actuated by Social Love, as frequently to act in direct Contradiction to that of Self?
>
> A great many more Arguments might be adduced to prove, that Social Love is a nobler, independent Principle, by itself, were not the secret Sense, that every good Man has of the Matter, instead of a thousand.[1]

Transposed to a political and historical context, 'social love' becomes 'public zeal', and blends with the strain of Whig liberty in Thomson's early work.

> Historic truth
> Should next conduct us thro' the deeps of time:
> Point us how empire grew, revolv'd, and fell,
> In scatter'd states; what makes the nations smile,
> Improves their soil, and gives them double suns;
> And why they pine beneath the brightest skies,
> In nature's richest lap. As thus we talk'd,
> Our hearts would burn within us, would inhale
> That portion of divinity, that ray
> Of purest heaven, which lights the glorious flame
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> (*Winter*, octavo edition, 1730, ll. 489–99.)

In *Britannia* the exaltation of liberty—'The light of life! the sun of human kind!'—already has as its inevitable correlative the warning against luxury, corruption, and selfishness. *Liberty* is an unsuccessful attempt to develop this theme still further by Thomson's eclectic method, by an elaborate synthesis of religion, ethics, cultural history, and politics.

The appeal to the example of the Roman patriot had been commonplace since the Renaissance.[2] One need only think of

[1] *A Collection of Letters Written to the Late Aaron Hill*, pp. 56–7. To Hill, 18 April 1726.

[2] See G. Chinard, 'Héritage de la Liberté', *Renaissance*, i (1943), 60–80; Zera S. Fink, *The Classical Republicans* (Evanston, 1945).

1189, when "all the doctors in the different faculties," and their more distinguished pupils, and the rest of the scholars, were (as we have seen) entertained by Giraldus Cambrensis on the second and third days of his memorable recitation[1].

The Franciscan friars of 1224 were well received by the university, and, in those early times, were on excellent terms with the secular clergy. They were men of cheerful temper, and possessed the courtesy and charm that come from sympathy. From Eccleston's account of the coming of the Friars Minor, we learn that, "as Oxford was the principal place of study in England, where the whole body (or *universitas*) of scholars was wont to congregate, Friar Agnellus (the provincial Head of the Order) caused a school of sufficiently decent appearance to be built on the site where the Friars had settled, and induced Robert Grosseteste of holy memory to lecture to them there; under him they made extraordinary progress in sermons, as well as in subtle moral themes suitable for preaching," and continued to do so until "he was transferred by Divine Providence from the lecturer's chair to the episcopal see."[2] He was already interested in them about 1225[3]; and it was, possibly, before 1231 that he was appointed their lecturer. He was then more than fifty years of age, not a friar, but a secular priest, and one of the most influential men in Oxford. To the friars he was much more than a lecturer; he was their sympathetic friend and adviser, and, after he had become bishop of Lincoln in 1235, he repeatedly commended the zeal, piety and usefulness of their order. About 1238, he wrote in praise of them to Gregory IX: "Your Holiness may be assured that in England inestimable benefits have been produced by the Friars; they illuminate the whole land by their preaching and learning[4]."

Grosseteste, a native of Stradbroke in Suffolk, was educated at Oxford. It is often stated that he also studied in Paris; but of this there is no contemporary evidence. It is true that, as bishop of Lincoln, he writes to the regents in theology at Oxford, recommending them to abide by the system of lecturing adopted by the regents in theology in Paris[5], but he says nothing of Paris in connection with his own education. While he was still at Oxford, he held an office corresponding to that of the chancellor in Paris, but he was not allowed by the

[1] Giraldus, I, 72 f., 410; III, 92, where "*Magister Gualterus magister Oxoniensis, archidiaconus*," is probably a mistake for "*Magister Gualterus Mapus, Oxoniensis archidiaconus*" (cp. I, 412).

[2] *Mon. Franc.* I, 37; cf. ib. 64—66.

[3] *Ep.* 2.

[4] *Ep.* 58; cf. *Epp.* 20, 41, 67.

[5] *Ep.* 123.

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reform of the monasteries, generously pays the following tribute to his memory:

Thus the saintly ..bishop of Lincoln passed away from the exile of this world, which he never loved....He had been the rebuker of pope and king, the corrector of bishops, the reformer of monks, the director of priests, the instructor of clerks, the patron of scholars, the preacher of the people,.. the careful student of the Scriptures, the hammer and the contemner of the Romans. At the table of bodily food, he was liberal, courteous and affable; at the table of spiritual food, devout, tearful and penitent; as a prelate, sedulous, venerable and never weary in well-doing[1].

Grosseteste's friend Adam Marsh, who had been educated under him at Oxford and had entered the priesthood, joined the Franciscan order shortly after 1226. The first four lecturers to the Franciscans in Oxford (beginning with Grosseteste) were seculars; the first Franciscan to hold that office was Adam Marsh[2], who was probably appointed for the year 1247—8. Provision was then made for a regular succession of teachers, and soon there were fifty Franciscan lectureships in various parts of England. Out of love for Adam Marsh, Grosseteste left his library to the Oxford Franciscans[3]. Like Grosseteste, he is a friend and adviser of Simon de Montfort, and faithfully tells him that "he who can rule his own temper is better than he who storms a city[4]." The king and the archbishop of Canterbury urged his appointment as bishop of Ely; but Rome decided in favour of Hugo de Balsham (1257), the future founder of Peterhouse (1284). In his *Letters* Marsh's style is less classical than that of Grosseteste; but the attainments of both of these lecturers to the Oxford Franciscans are warmly eulogised by their pupil, Roger Bacon. He mentions them in good company—immediately after Solomon, Aristotle and Avicenna, describing both of them as "perfect in divine and human wisdom[5]." On the death of Alexander of Hales (1245), Grosseteste was afraid that Adam Marsh would be captured by Paris to fill the vacant chair[6]. His *Letters*, his only surviving work, give him no special claim to those scholastic qualities of clearness and precision that were possibly indicated in his traditional title of *Doctor illustris*.

Roger Bacon, a native of Ilchester, was the most brilliant representative of the Franciscan order in Oxford. He there attended the lectures of Edmund Rich of Abingdon, who had studied in Paris, who could preach in French and who was possibly himself the French translator of his principal Latin work,

[1] *Chronica Majora*, v, 407, ed. Luard.
[2] *Mon. Franc.* i, 185.
[3] *Opus Tertium*, c. 22 f., 25.
[4] *Mon. Franc.* i, 38.
[5] *Ib.* i, 261.
[6] *Ep.* 331.

estate, republican liberty was constantly threatened by the contentions of patrician and plebeian, and the eternal vigilance of the patriot was required to prevent an almost inevitable loss of balance:

The Roman Commonwealth would have been dissolved much sooner than it was, by the Defects I have mentioned; which many Circumstances concurred to aggravate, if such a Spirit of Wisdom, as well as Courage, and such an Enthusiasm for the Grandeur, the Majesty, and the Duration of their Empire had not possessed this People, as never possess'd any other.[1]

Their Virtue such, that an unballanc'd State,
Still between Noble and Plebeian tost,
As flow'd the Wave of fluctuating Power,
By that kept firm, and with triumphant Prow
Rode out the Storms. Oft tho' the Native Feuds,
That from the first their Constitution shook,
(A latent Ruin, growing as it grew)
Stood on the threatening Point of Civil War
Ready to rush: yet could the lenient Voice
Of Wisdom, soothing the tumultuous Soul,
These Sons of Virtue calm. (*Liberty*, iii. 197–207.)

If the Opposition exalts the self-sacrificing patriot, it assumes also that power will be abused, especially by Walpole, and encourages endless ingeminations about corruption and faction. It is an old story, and the *Craftsman* had no monopoly of such ideas. Thomson used Rollin and Plutarch, and a special source for his version of Roman history was Vertot's *History of the Revolutions that Happened in the Government of the Roman Republic*, to use the title of the English translation (1720). What brings the *Craftsman* closest to *Liberty* is the political and moral animus of the application of the classical precedents to modern Britain.

The famous series of papers on English history in the *Craftsman* (nos. 213–55, 1 August 1730–22 May 1731) proceeds on the basic parallel: the spirit of liberty waxes and wanes alike in Rome and Britain; but though every opportunity for a parallel is improved, the emphasis now falls less on the Plutarchan hero than on the citizen's primordial rights and their embodiment in the British constitution. Both journalist and poet use the idea

[1] xiii. 80, 16 Nov. 1734.

Possibly, he is here referring to the pages on the secret works of nature and art, on Greek fire, on gunpowder and on the properties of the magnet[1], on which he had discoursed in letters addressed either to William of Auvergne (d. 1218), or to John of Basingstoke (d. 1252). He was surrounded with difficulties; he found philosophy and theology neglected in the interests of civil law, and despised under the delusion that the world knew enough of them already. He had spent forty years in the study of the sciences and languages, and, during the first twenty years specially devoted by him to the attainment of fuller knowledge (possibly before joining a mendicant order), he had expended large sums on his learned pursuits. None would now lend him any money to meet the expense of preparing his works for the pope, and he could not persuade any one that there was the slightest use in science[2]. Thankful, however, for the pope's interest in his studies, he set to work with enthusiasm and delight, though he was strictly bound by the vow of poverty, and had now nothing of his own to spend on his literary and scientific labours.

His principal works, beginning with the three prepared for the pope, are as follows:

Opus Majus, which remained unknown until its publication by Samuel Jebb in 1733. It has since been recognised as the *Encyclopédie* and the *Organon* of the thirteenth century. It is divided into seven parts: (1) the causes of human ignorance; (2) the connection between philosophy and theology; (3) the study of language; (4) mathematical science; (5) physics (especially optics); (6) experimental science; and (7) moral philosophy. The part on language was preserved in an imperfect form; that on moral philosophy was omitted in Jebb's edition.

Opus Minus was first published by John Sherren Brewer in 1859 (with portions of *Opus Tertium* and *Compendium Studii Philosophiae*). It was written partly to elucidate certain points in *Opus Majus*, partly to meet the risk of the earlier treatise failing to reach its destination. It enters more fully into an examination of the schoolmen; it exposes the pretensions of the Franciscan, Alexander of Hales, and of an unnamed Dominican. It recapitulates the passages in the previous work which the author deems especially important, and discusses the six great errors that stand in the way of the studies of Latin Christendom, namely (1) the subjection of theology to philosophy; (2) the general ignorance of science; (3) implicit trust in the dicta of

[1] *Opera Inedita*, 536 f. [2] Ib. [illegible]

Of each harmonious Power: only, too much,
Imperious War into their Rule infus'd,
Prevail'd the General-King, and Chieftain-Thanes.
(*Liberty*, iv. 685–99.)

Thus the Saxon was a freeman from remotest time, yet attained freedom more and more fully in the course of British political history—a striking example of the coexistence of the ideas of primitivism and progress. While the writers of the *Craftsman* are less interested than Thomson in the primitive stage, they show his pride in the early British resistance to Roman invasion and they assert more emphatically than he does the actual realization of political freedom in Anglo-Saxon times: 'the Principles of the Saxon Commonwealth were very Democratical; and these Principles prevailed through all subsequent Changes.' Though the Saxon *Heretoges*, originally leaders in war, became kings, 'the supreme Power center'd in the *Micklemote*, or *Wittagenmote* [*sic*], composed of the King, the Lords, and the Saxon Freemen, that original Sketch of a British Parliament'.

The original State of Monarchy is justly described very different from what it is now in all arbitrary Governments. Kings were then no more than Chiefs, or principal Magistrates, in States Republican and free.

It ought to give every Englishman the greatest Satisfaction to find the Constitution we now live under, since its last Renewal, bearing so near a Resemblance to primitive Liberty.

Let us then 'continue to ourselves the peculiar Honour of maintaining the Freedom of our Gothick Institution of Government, when so many other Nations, who enjoy'd the same, have lost theirs'.[1]

The question of the origins of popular representation in Parliament, a complex problem for the impartial historian, was a stock theme of political journalism in the 1730's. The *Craftsman* dwelt on the ancient tradition of British liberty in order to throw into sharper relief the alleged violations of the Constitution by Walpole's régime. Both the series of papers on British history and the second series called 'A Dissertation on Parties' appropriated the originally Whig doctrine of ancient Gothic liberty and forced the other side to minimize the early liberties of England in order to exalt the Revolution settlement. The

[1] vii. 50–1, 2 Oct. 1730; xi. 117–18, 11 Aug. 1733; xii. 94–5, 19 Jan. 1734.

ledge of Greek was mainly derived from the Greeks of his own day, probably from some of the Greek teachers invited to England by Grosseteste[1]. He invariably adopts the late Byzantine pronunciation; and, in his general treatment of grammar, he follows the Byzantine tradition. This work was first published by the Cambridge University Press in 1902.

Compendium Studii Theologiae, Bacon's latest work, deals with causes of error, and also with logic and grammar in reference to theology. The above parts are extant in an imperfect form, and only extracts from them have been printed from a MS in the British Museum[2]. A "fifth part," on optics, is preserved in a nearly complete condition in the same library.

Roger Bacon was the earliest of the natural philosophers of western Europe. In opposition to the physicists of Paris, he urged that "enquiry should begin with the simplest objects of science, and rise gradually to the higher and higher," every observation being controlled by experiment. In science he was at least a century in advance of his time; and, in spite of the long and bitter persecutions that he endured, he was full of hope for the future. He has been described by Diderot as "one of the most surprising geniuses that nature had ever produced, and one of the most unfortunate of men." He left no disciple. His unknown grave among the tombs of the Friars Minor was marked by no monument; a tower, traditionally known as "Friar Bacon's Study," stood, until 1779, on the old Grand Pont (the present Folly bridge) of Oxford. The fact that he had revived the study of mathematics was recorded by an anonymous writer about 1370[3]. A long passage in his *Opus Majus*[4], on the distance between the extreme east and west of the habitable globe, inserted (without mention of its source) in the *Imago Mundi* of Pierre d'Ailly, was thence quoted by Columbus in 1498 as one of the authorities that had prompted him to venture on his great voyages of discovery. Meanwhile, in popular repute, friar Bacon was regarded only as an alchemist and a necromancer. During the three centuries subsequent to his death, only four of his minor works, those on *Alchemy*, on the *Power of Art and Nature* and on the *Cure of Old Age*, were published in 1485—1590. Like Vergil, he was reputed to have used a "glass prospective" of wondrous power, and, like others in advance of their times, such as Gerbert of Aurillac,

[1] *Comp. Phil.* 434.
[2] Little's *Grey Friars at Oxford*, 195 n.
[3] Émile Charles .10—0
[4] *Opus Majus*, ed. Bridges, I, xxxiii, 290

indebtedness goes far beyond his acknowledgements, and could be illustrated at length. It is the progress of liberty, and yet liberty had to be there already to produce and maintain itself. The head accepted progress; the heart preferred to dwell on origins. Thomson as a child of the Enlightenment could not fail to see some merit in the contention of the Whig journalists that England had struggled up from darkness and slavery, but the thought of old glorious Rome or the unsubmitting Goths imparted more fervour to his rhetoric, and the *Craftsman* encouraged this emphasis.

The *Craftsman*'s papers on English history run parallel with Rapin in Thomson's background, and to them he frequently turned, making more concessions, however, to the contemporary Whig view that early royal power had been excessive, that the Middle Ages were bad times, and that later reforms were essential. On the question of when popular representation actually began, Thomson follows Rapin; he is inclined to make the Anglo-Saxon king more of a military dictator, less of a constitutional magistrate, than the *Craftsman*.[1] Rapin is sceptical about the existence of a popular Anglo-Saxon legislature, and is inclined to date the true beginning of popular representation from Henry III's famous orders of 1264. Thomson's note on this point, appended to *Liberty*, iv. 796, is made up of extracts from Rapin:

> The Commons are generally thought to have been first represented in Parliament towards the end of Henry the third's Reign. To a Parliament called in the Year 1264, each County was ordered to send four Knights, as Representatives of their respective Shires: And to a Parliament called in the Year following, each County was ordered to send, as their Representatives, two Knights, and each City and Burrough as many Citizens and Burgesses. Till then, History makes no Mention of them; whence a very strong Argument may be drawn, to fix the Original of the House of Commons to that Era.[2]

[1] If the view of monarchy in the *Craftsman* is Bolingbroke's, its difference from the famous doctrine of the *Patriot King* should be noted. See Paul Baratier, *Lord Bolingbroke: ses écrits politiques* (Paris, 1939), pp. 255–7.

[2] See Rapin, trans. Tindal, 2nd ed. (1732), i. 155, 340. Tindal's note, protesting against Rapin's scepticism about early popular representation, and appealing to the Whig authorities Petit, Tyrrell, and Hody, is taken without acknowledgement from Echard's *History of England*, 3rd ed. (London, 1720), p. 124. It is quoted approvingly by the *Craftsman* (xii. 186, 6 April 1734). In this instance Thomson follows the text of Rapin without heeding Tindal's protest.

taught until 1307. Among the scholars from Oxford who attended his lectures, was John Canon (*fl.* 1320), a commentator on Peter Lombard, and on Aristotle's *Physics*. Duns Scotus died in 1308, at Cologne, where his tomb in the Franciscan church bears the inscription—*Scotia me genuit, Anglia me suscepit, Gallia me docuit, Colonia me tenet.*

The works ascribed to his pen fill twelve folio volumes in the edition printed at Lyons in 1639. At Oxford, Paris and Cologne, he constantly opposed the teaching of Thomas Aquinas, thus founding the philosophical and theological school of the Scotists. But he was stronger in the criticism of the opinions of others than in the construction of a system of his own. While the aim of Aquinas is to bring faith into harmony with reason, Duns Scotus has less confidence in the power of reason; he accordingly enlarges the number of doctrines already recognised as capable of being apprehended by faith alone. In philosophy, his devotion to Aristotle is less exclusive than that of Aquinas, and he adopts many Platonic and Neo-Platonic conceptions. "All created things (he holds) have, besides their form, some species of matter. Not matter, but form, is the individualising principle; the generic and specific characters are modified by the individual peculiarity," by the *haecceitas*, or "thisness," of the thing. "The universal essence is distinct...from the individual peculiarity," but does not exist apart from it. With the great Dominicans, Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, the Franciscan Duns Scotus "agrees in assuming a threefold existence of the universal: it is *before* all things, as form in the divine mind; *in* things, as their essence (*quidditas*); and *after* things, as the concept formed by mental abstraction." He claims for the individual a real existence, and he accordingly condemns nominalism[1].

But, even in the ranks of the realists, the extravagant realism of Duns Scotus was followed by a reaction, led by Wyclif, who (for England at least) is at once "the last of the schoolmen" and "the first of the reformers." Later reformers, such as Tindale (1530), were joined by the humanists in opposing the subtleties of Scotus. The influence of scholasticism in England ended with 1535, when the idol of the schools was dragged from his pedestal at Oxford and Cambridge, and when one of Thomas Cromwell's commissioners wrote to his master from Oxford:

> We have set Dunce in *Bocardo*, and have utterly banished him Oxford for ever, with all his blynd glosses...(At New College) wee fownde all the

[1] Ueberweg, *History of Philosophy*, E. T. I, 453 f.

Black Prince.) *Liberty* is dedicated to Prince Frederick, and the poem has a perfunctory line or two about Alfred, but it is evident that the theme of the liberty-loving Saxon king, elaborated as an anti-type to George II, found later expression in the masque of *Alfred*, by Thomson and Mallet, produced before the Prince and Princess at Cliefden, 1 August 1740.

Five months after *Liberty* iii had appeared, the *Craftsman* devoted a leading essay to the poem under the caption, 'Of a Passion for Liberty'. The essay begins with a long quotation, i. 346–63, the address to the Goddess of Liberty, and comments, after a bitter reference to the 'abandoned Crew of Scribblers' who write 'in Defence of ministerial Authority':

> As the great and virtuous Sentiments, convey'd in the Motto to this Letter, are equally of Use to strengthen the Foundation of Liberty, and to elevate any System of publick Good, that can be rais'd upon it, every servile Pen hath been employ'd, either absurdly to question the Truth, or infamously to weaken the Force, by endeavouring to divert the Influence of them.[1]

The *Craftsman*, always alert for acts of political censorship, is surprised that *Liberty* has not already incurred official disapproval:

> The Poem itself, indeed, from whence these Lines are taken, hath pass'd uncensur'd, and the Author unblemish'd; but it seems to be the only Exception to that unlicens'd Abuse, which has been thrown upon every Man, who has express'd his Fear for the Publick, or his Concern for the Welfare of it. So little Decency has been observ'd in This, that the sincerest Friends of the Government have been treated as the Enemies of it, and the warmest as the Destroyers of the Constitution. The Hands prostituted in this detestable Service have not discovered less Readiness to engage, than Incapacity to succeed in it; and therefore They are too low to draw any farther Remarks from me. But the destructive Views of Him, who prompts and supports them, creates [*sic*] in a good Mind an honest Indignation, accompanied with such Reflections as ought not to be stifled.

Another quotation from *Liberty*, iii. 103–52, on public spirit among the Romans, is the basis for a long discussion of public spirit in general, which must be derived, says the writer, not

[1] 16 Aug. 1735, reprinted in part in *Gentleman's Magazine* (1735), v. 475–6, dated 23 Aug. *London Magazine*, iv (1735), 433, also prints this number in part, but omits the long passages on Thomson's *Liberty*. These passages are also omitted from the collected edition of the *Craftsman*.

Burleigh, who studied at Paris and taught at Oxford. He was the first in modern times who attempted to write a history of ancient philosophy. He knew no Greek; but he, nevertheless, wrote 133 treatises on Aristotle alone, dedicating his commentary on the *Ethics* and *Politics* to Richard of Bury.

Among the opponents of the mendicant orders at Oxford, about 1321, was a scholar of Paris and Oxford, and a precursor of Wyclif, named John Baconthorpe (d. 1346), a man of exceedingly diminutive stature, who is known as the Resolute Doctor, and as the great glory of the Carmelites. A voluminous writer of theological and scholastic treatises (including commentaries on Aristotle), he was long regarded as the prince of the Averroists, and, nearly three centuries after his death, his works were still studied in Padua.

Scholasticism survived in the person of Thomas Bradwardine, who was consecrated archbishop of Canterbury, shortly before his death in 1349. Educated at Merton College, Oxford, he expanded his college lectures on theology into a treatise that gained him the title of *Doctor profundus*. He is respectfully mentioned by Chaucer in company with St Augustine and Boethius:

> But I ne can not bulte it to the bren,
> As can the holy doctour Augustyn,
> Or Boëce, or the bishop Bradwardyn[1].

In the favourable opinion of his editor, Sir Henry Savile (1618), he derived his philosophy from Aristotle and Plato. His pages abound with quotations from Seneca, Ptolemy, Boethius and Cassiodorus; but there is reason to believe that all this learning was gleaned from the library of his friend, Richard of Bury, to whom he was chaplain in 1335.

Richard of Bury was the son of *Sir Richard Aungerville*. Born within sight of the Benedictine abbey of Bury St Edmunds, he is sometimes said to have subsequently entered the Benedictine convent at Durham. In the meantime, he had certainly distinguished himself in philosophy and theology at Oxford. From his academic studies he was called to be tutor to prince Edward, the future king Edward III. The literary interests with which he inspired the prince may well have led to Edward's patronage of Chaucer and of Froissart. In 1330 and 1333, he was sent as envoy to the pope at Avignon; and it was in recognition of these diplomatic services that he was made dean of Wells, and bishop of Durham.

[1] *Canterbury Tales*, [illegible]

THE FIRST HISTORY OF ENGLISH POETRY

JAMES M. OSBORN

PARADOXICALLY, the earliest History of English Poetry was written in French, and has not hitherto been printed. The author was the Reverend Joseph Spence, whose *Anecdotes, Observations and Characters of Books and Men* are familiar to all students of the eighteenth century, particularly to specialists in the Age of Pope.

The manuscript containing this History is preserved among Spence's literary and personal papers, now in my library. A small octavo volume, handsomely bound by the fifth Duke of Newcastle,[1] the spine carries the misleading title, 'J. Spence. Lessons in Learning French & Italian'. The first leaf serves as a table of contents in Spence's hand, and is also headed 'Lessons, in learning French; and Italian'. The first item in this table is described as 'History of English Poetry. p: 1–40'. The right-hand pages carry the text, and the left-hand pages were left for notes, about half of them being blank. The title at the beginning of the text reads, 'Quelques Remarques Hist: sur les Poëts Anglois'.

When did Spence write this History? Why did he do so, and why in French? These questions cannot be answered with certainty. The most challenging problem is *when*, because the answer bears so heavily on *why* Spence wrote this essay. Even *where* enters into the discussion, since Spence's travels on the Continent affect the case. The first of Spence's three extended absences from England began in December 1730 and continued until July of 1733, when he accompanied the youthful Charles Sackville, Earl of Middlesex (later second Duke of Dorset), to France and Italy. In May 1737 Spence made a tour through Holland, Flanders, and France with a Mr. Trevor, returning to England in February 1738. In 1739 he again set out to make the Grand Tour with Henry Clinton, Earl of Lincoln, afterwards second Duke of Newcastle. Two and a half years were spent in Italy and France before their return in November 1742.

The evidence suggests that Spence's 'History of English

[1] From whose heirs I purchased the Spence MSS. at Sotheby's on 16 Feb. 1938. His great-grandfather, the second Duke, had been a pupil of Spence, of which more hereafter.

the ages when the monks used to copy manuscripts "between the hours of prayer[1]." He also presents us with a vivid picture of his own eagerness in collecting books with the aid of the *stationarii* and *librarii* of France, Germany and Italy. For some of his purchases he sends to Rome, while he dwells with rapture on his visits to Paris, "the paradise of the world," "where the days seemed ever few for the greatness of our love. *There* are the delightful libraries, more aromatic than stores of spicery; *there*, the verdant pleasure-gardens of all varieties of volumes[2]." He adds that, in his own manors, he always employed a large number of copyists, as well as binders and illuminators[3]; and he pays an eloquent tribute to his beloved books:

> Truth, that triumphs over all things, seems to endure more usefully, and to fructify with greater profit in books. The meaning of the voice perishes with the sound; truth latent in the mind is only a hidden wisdom, a buried treasure; but truth that shines forth from books is eager to manifest itself to all our senses. It commends itself to the sight, when it is read; to the hearing, when it is heard; and even to the touch, when it suffers itself to be transcribed, bound, corrected, and preserved. ..What pleasantness of teaching there is in books, how easy, how secret! How safely and how frankly do we disclose to books our human poverty of mind! They are masters who instruct us without rod or ferule....If you approach them, they are not asleep; if you inquire of them, they do not withdraw themselves; they never chide, when you make mistakes; they never laugh, if you are ignorant[4].

Towards the close, he confides to us the fact that he had "long cherished the fixed resolve of founding in perpetual charity a hall in the revered university of Oxford, the chief nursing-mother of all liberal arts, and of endowing it with the necessary revenues, for the maintenance of a number of scholars, and, moreover, to furnish the hall with the treasures of our books[5]." He gives rules for the management of the library, rules founded in part on those adopted in Paris for the library of the Sorbonne. He contemplated the permanent endowment of the Benedictine house of Durham College in the university of Oxford, and bequeathed to that college the precious volumes he had collected at Bishop Auckland. The ancient monastic house was dissolved, and Trinity College rose on its ruins; but the library, built to contain the bishop's books, still remains, though the books are lost, and even the catalogue has vanished. His tomb in Durham cathedral, marked by "a faire marble stone, whereon his owne ymage was most curiously and artificially ingraven in brass[6]" has been,

[1] § 74. [2] § 126. [3] § 143.
[4] §§ 23, 26. [5] § 232.
[6] *Description of Monuments* (1593), Surtees Society, p. 2

we accept the premiss that Spence wrote these notes in France or Italy, the edition of 1732 could have been available soon after publication. Similarly, on p. 237 Spence has jotted a comment from the lips of his Florentine friend, the learned Dr. Cocchi. Since copious quotations from the same source appear in the published *Anecdotes* under 'Section III, 1732–33', it is reasonable to attribute this note to the same period.

The possibility that this manuscript was written not in 1732–3 but on one of Spence's later tours seems unlikely. None of his comments, notes, or allusions argue in favour of the later dates. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, there is reason to believe that he wrote these pages in 1732–3, while in an early flush of enthusiasm during his first visit to France and Italy when acquiring fluency in the tongues of those countries.

To revert to the question, '*Why* did Spence write this history of English Poetry', two leading alternatives are present. The first is that he prepared this essay for the benefit of Lord Middlesex as a double-barrelled assignment—to teach his pupil a valued subject-matter while drilling him in the French language. Formerly I considered this the most likely explanation.[1] But continued familiarity with the text prompts the conclusion that Spence wrote this History for himself, and not for a pupil. The tone and nature of the notes indicate that he was writing for a mature audience, rather than his young companion. Spence's erudition is not great, but his attitude is adult, especially considering the status of literary history in the decade 1730–40.

Another factor to be remembered is that in 1728, while still less than thirty years of age, Spence had been elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford, succeeding the elder Thomas Warton (father of the great historian of English poetry, who later occupied the same professorship). How many lectures on poetry Spence delivered at Oxford is not known, since none are extant.[2] Yet he says in the preface to *Polymetis* that the professor-

[1] This suggestion appears as note 98 on p. 228 of *The Rise of English Literary History* (1941) by my friend René Wellek. I supplied information for this note when reading his invaluable book in typescript. In the interval I have revised my opinion. Throughout the following pages I am repeatedly under obligation to Wellek's published writings, and for suggestions and criticisms made orally.

[2] Among the Spence papers sold by S. W. Singer at Sotheby's on 3 Aug. 1858 was item 197, 'Mr. Spence's Lectures on the Iliad'. Where are they now?

the ages when the monks used to copy manuscripts "between the hours of prayer[1]." He also presents us with a vivid picture of his own eagerness in collecting books with the aid of the *stationarii* and *librarii* of France, Germany and Italy. For some of his purchases he sends to Rome, while he dwells with rapture on his visits to Paris, "the paradise of the world," "where the days seemed ever few for the greatness of our love. *There* are the delightful libraries, more aromatic than stores of spicery; *there*, the verdant pleasure-gardens of all varieties of volumes[2]." He adds that, in his own manors, he always employed a large number of copyists, as well as binders and illuminators[3]; and he pays an eloquent tribute to his beloved books:

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CHAPTER XI

EARLY TRANSITION ENGLISH

The description which suggests itself for the century from 1150 to 1250, so far as native literature is concerned, is that of the Early Transition period. It marks the first great advance from the old to the new, though another period of progress was necessary to bring about in its fulness the dawn of literary English. The changes of the period were many and far-reaching. In politics and social affairs we see a gradual welding together of the various elements of the nation, accompanied by a slow evolution of the idea of individual liberty. In linguistic matters we find not only profit and loss in details of the vocabulary, together with innovation in the direction of a simpler syntax, but also a modification of actual pronunciation—the effect of the work of two centuries on Old English speech-sounds. In scribal methods, again, a transition is visible. Manuscripts were no longer written in the Celtic characters of pre-Conquest times, but in the modification of the Latin alphabet practised by French scribes. And these changes find their counterpart in literary history, in changes of material, changes of form, changes of literary temper. Anselm and his school had displayed to English writers a new realm of theological writings; Anglo-Norman secular *littérateurs* had further enlarged the field for literary adventurers; and, since the tentative efforts resulting from these innovations took, for the most part, the form of their models, radical changes in verse-form soon became palpable. The literary temper began to betray signs of a desire for freedom. Earlier limitations were no longer capable of satisfying the new impulses. Legend and romance led on the imagination; the motives of love and mysticism began lightly touching the literary work of the time to finer issues; and, such was the advance in artistic ideals, especially during the latter part of the period, that it may fairly be regarded as a fresh illustration of the saying of Ruskin that "the root of all art is struck in the thirteenth century."

The first half of the period (1150—1200) may be roughly

(1753), Birch's augmented edition of Bayle's *General Dictionary, Biographical and Critical* (1734–41), and the *Biographia Britannica* (1747–66).

Concurrent with these purely biographical compilations, anthologies developed: books of specimens from the writings of selected poets, preceded by introductory remarks, biographical and critical. Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper's *Muses Library* (1737) was a landmark in this field. Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) applied the plan to anonymous poems and ballads. Dr. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, though nowadays printed separately from the poetic selections, were the eighteenth-century culmination of this tradition—biographical and critical introductions to pages of poetical specimens.

In the 'progress of poetry' genre the historical approach made its first toddling steps. Addison's *Account of the Greatest English Poets* (1694) opened with the age when 'Chaucer first, the merry bard, arose' and hurried through Spenser, Cowley, Milton, Waller, Roscommon, Denham, Dryden, Montague and Congreve. (Observe that *only* four of these 'greatest poets' were dead before Addison's own lifetime.) Samuel Cobb's *Of Poetry; Its Progress* (1700) began with Moses and Orpheus, and worked its way through the mention of over two dozen English poets, all but six of them living after the Restoration. Similarly with Mrs. Judith Madan's 'flower piece' entitled *The Progress of Poetry* (1721); her primary attention was devoted to the poets of Greece and Rome, followed by a succession of English worthies culminating in Nicholas Rowe. Thomas Gray's *Progress of Poesy* (1757) concerned itself primarily with 'the higher and truer', though Gray admitted Shakespeare, Milton, and Dryden into the main stream of poetry flowing from Mount Olympus. The genre of 'progress poems' never emerged from its self-imposed restrictions; they shuffled in the well-worn path of chronology instead of bounding with strength derived from an organic concept.

Other authors of the eighteenth century, in striving to create an art of literary history, became involved in a number of confusing ideas. Wellek has examined these misconceptions in detail, and has shown their evolution; some of them were soon discovered to be nonsense, and others are still flourishing. A favourite topic, for example, was the influence of climate on poetry. Though the idea derives originally from Plato and

nection of the proverbs with Alfred himself must be accepted with some reserve. His fame as a proverb-maker is implied in the later *Owl and the Nightingale* and is even more explicitly maintained elsewhere: *Eluredus in proverbiis ita enituit ut nemo post illum amplius*[1]. But no collection of Alfredian proverbs is known to have existed in Old English; and, since some of the sayings occur in the later collection known by the name of Hendyng, it may well have been that the use of the West Saxon king's name in this collection was nothing more than a patriotic device for adding to popular sayings the authority of a great name. It is noteworthy that the matter of the proverbs is curiously mixed. There is, first, the shrewd philosophy of popular origin. Then there are religious elements: Christ's will is to be followed; the soldier must fight that the church may have rest; while monastic scorn possibly lurks in the sections which deal with woman and marriage. And, thirdly, there are utterances similar to those in Old English didactic works like *A Father's Instruction*, where definite precepts as to conduct are laid down[2]. The metrical form of the *Proverbs* is no less interesting. The verse is of the earlier alliterative type, but it shows precisely the same symptoms of change as that of certain tenth and eleventh century poems[3]. The caesura is preserved, but the long line is broken in two. The laws of purely alliterative verse are no longer followed; an attempt is rather made to place words in the order of thought. There are occasional appearances of the leonine rime and assonance, characteristic of tenth and eleventh century work; but, at best, the structure is irregular. In section xxii. an attempt has apparently been made—possibly by a later scribe—to smooth out irregularities and to approximate the short couplet in rime and rhythm. The reforming hand of the adapter, as in other Middle English poems, is also seen elsewhere: but, these details apart, the work belongs entirely in both form and spirit to the earlier period.

Alongside these survivals of an earlier day there were not wanting signs of a new *régime*. In the *Canute Song* (c. 1167), for instance, can be seen the popular verse striving in the direction of foreign style. The song is of rude workmanship, but the effect aimed at is not an alliterative one. Rime and assonance are present, and the line, as compared with earlier examples, will be seen to reveal definite attempts at hammering out a regular rhythm.

[1] *Ann. Mon. Winton. Anglia Sacra*, i. 289.

[2] *e.g.* "If thou dost harbour sorrow, let not thine arrow know it; whisper it not to thy saddle-bow and ride abroad with song."

[3] Cf. *O. E. Chronicle*, 975, 1036.

on this subject, but his project never got beyond the drafting board.[1]

Spence's brief history is innocent of this analogy, and says nothing at all about 'schools'. This raises a very interesting point, for in the epistle dedicatory to the 1736 edition of *Gorboduc*, undertaken at the request of Pope, Spence states, '. . . there are Schools in Poetry, as distinguishable as those in Painting'. If Spence had been aware of this idea when he wrote the 'History of English Poetry' it is highly probable that he would have employed it there. Here we have another bit of evidence that the 'History of English Poetry' was written on the first Grand Tour. This incident also suggests that Spence may have acquired the 'schools' concept from Alexander Pope between 1733 and the publication of *Gordobuc* in 1736.

Several features of Spence's History deserve attention. First is the fact that Spence organized it according to the centuries in which the poets lived and wrote. Most historians in England were still thinking in terms of the reigns of kings, instead of by centuries. Spence shows an awareness of the age in which his subject authors existed.[2] Another feature is Spence's concept of his own time as '. . . nôtre Age Augustaine: qui commence avec la Restauration de Charles 2'. This term was beginning to be used in Spence's day, but instances are rare.[3] It is especially interesting to observe Spence's awareness that the Augustan age in England began at the Restoration in 1660.

Some of Spence's critical judgements are worth noting. He shows a close familiarity with the writings of Sackville, whose merits he felt were inadequately appreciated. The explanation of this familiarity is found in the epistle dedicatory to the 1736 *Gorboduc*, cited above on this page. Addressed to his pupil on the Tour of 1730–3, the Earl of Middlesex, the epistle began, 'I have often had the pleasure of talking with Your Lordship of

[1] Gray's letter to Warton was first published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for Feb. 1783, pp. 100–1. Pope's sketch first appeared in Ruffhead's *Life of Pope* (1769), p. 425. When Pope wrote it is unknown.

[2] William Cave anticipated Spence in using historical centuries to show the respective times when his authors lived, in the *Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Historia Literaria* (1688). See Wellek, op. cit., p. 19. Bale had used the word 'centuries' in a different sense; he included one hundred authors in each chapter, and designated them as a 'century'.

[3] See Bateson, F. W., *English Poetry and the English Language* (1934), p. 49; Isaacs, J., *Times Literary Supplement*, 9 May 1935, p. 301; Wellek, René, in the *English Institute Annual* (1940), p. 78.

books (cf. l. 221). But his treatment of the subject has much that is new. It shows real feeling, though there are also the usual conventionalities; the poem contains ripe wisdom and sage advice. If the description of hell is characteristically material, heaven, on the other hand, is spiritually conceived. The verse-form is also interesting. Here, for the first time in English, is found the fourteener line, the catalectic tetrameter of Latin poets. The iambic movement of that line is adapted with wonderful facility to the native word-form, accent-displacement is not abnormally frequent and the lines run in couplets linked by end-rime. The old heroic utterance is exchanged for the paler abstractions of the Latin schools, and the loss of colour is emphasised by the absence of metaphor with its suggestion of energy. A corresponding gain is, however, derived from the more natural order of words; and, in general, the merits of the poem are perhaps best recognised by comparing its workmanship with that of the songs of Godric and by noting the advances made upon Old English forms in the direction of later verse.

Mention has already been made of the presence of foreign influences in certain of the twelfth century *Homilies*. Correspondences with the homiletic work of Radulfus Ardens of Acquitaine (c. 1100) and of Bernard of Clairvaux (1090—1153) point to the employment of late Latin originals. Certain quotations in these *Homilies* are also taken from Horace and Ovid—an exceptional proceeding in Old English works, though common in writings of the eleventh and twelfth centuries[1]; and thus the inference is clear that here Aelfric is not the sole, or even the main, influence, but that this is rather supplied by those French writers whose religious works became known in England after the Conquest. The influence of the same Norman school of theology is, moreover, visible in the *Old Kentish Sermons* (1150—1200). They are, in reality, translations of French texts, and signs of this origin are preserved in the diction employed, in the use of such words as *apierede*, *cuuenable* and others.

The latter half of the twelfth century was a period of experiment and of conflicting elements. It was a stage necessarily unproductive, but of great importance, notwithstanding, in the work of development. Older native traditions lived on; but access had been obtained to continental learning, and, while themes were being borrowed from Norman writers, as a consequence of the study of other

[1] Vollhardt, *Einfluss der lat. geistlichen Litt. auf einige kleinere Schöpfungen der engl. Uebergangsperiode*, pp. 6—18.

Bale) Spence based his comments on first-hand knowledge of the poems themselves. He individualized each poet from Chaucer onward, and attempted a brief evaluation of the achievements of each in the main stream of English poetry. He even showed a passing concern for the genres—satire, drama, occasional poetry, translations, wit, among others. In comparison with Spence's predecessors and contemporaries his pages are far ahead of their time. Spence recognized this situation when he wrote in 1736, 'Literary History has not to this day got much ground in our Island'.[1] His little French essay, though it has lain unrecognized for over two hundred years, marks the first foothold of literary history in England.

Of significance equal to the 'History of English Poetry' is a larger project that took form in Spence's mind apparently as an offshoot of this volume of 'Lessons in Learning French and Italian'. From notes on the title-leaf to this manuscript it is clear that Spence contemplated compiling a large 'Poetical Dictionary; in 12 Sections'. That he made a beginning is evident from jottings in the manuscript with references to his 'Mss Dict'.[2] Whether this compilation is still extant is a question; it is not among the Spence Papers, and Spence's biographer, Professor Austin Wright, has never encountered it.[3]

The notes on the title-leaf occupy the lower half of the page, and read as follows:

For Preface to Poetical Dictionary; in 12 ? Sections
(Hist^y of Poetry for above 2000 yrs.)

1. Druidical Poetry.
   Roman Poetry? Contr[acte]d from Pol[ymeti]s

2. How far in this Island
   Revival of Poetry: in Provence
   Italian shoot from it.

3. Chaucer, Piers Plowman, Mir[roi]r &c.
   Revival of Classical Learning in Italy
   Improvement of the Italian Poetry.

[1] Preface to *Gorboduc*, p. iv.

[2] pp. 53, 69, 71, 89, 223, 225, 229, 231, 239, 243, 247, 249, 251.

[3] Perhaps these were lot 200 among the Spence MSS. sold at Sotheby's, 3 August 1858, by S. W. Singer: 'Collections relating to the Lives of the Poets; catalogue of curious books and papers relating to poetical history by Mr. Spence'.

been formulated as to the rights of the individual citizen. This groping for political freedom found its intellectual counterpart in France, not only in the appearance of secular *littérateurs* but also in that school of laic architects which proceeded to modify French Gothic style[1]. In England, it appeared in a deliberate tendency to reject the religious themes which had been all but compulsory and to revert to that which was elemental in man. Fancy, in the shape of legend, was among these ineradicable elements, long despised by erudition and condemned by religion; and it was because the Arthurian legend offered satisfaction to some of the inmost cravings of the human heart, while it led the way to loftier ideals, that, when revealed, it succeeded in colouring much of the subsequent literature. The *Brut* of Layamon is, therefore, a silent witness to a literary revolt, in which the claims of legend and fancy were advanced anew for recognition in a field where religion had held the monopoly. And this spirit of revolt was further reinforced by the general assertion of another side of elemental man, viz. that connected with the passion of love. France, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, had been swept by a wave of popular love-poetry which brought in its wake the music of the troubadours. Germany, in the twelfth century, produced the minnesingers. The contemporary poets of Italy were also love-poets, and, at a slightly later date, Portugal, too, possessed many of the kind. This general inspiration, originating in France and passing over the frontiers on the lips of the troubadours (for, in each country, the original form of the popular poetry was one and the same[2]), was destined to touch English soil soon after 1200. Though it failed for some time to secularise English poetry, it imparted a note of passion to much of the religious work; and, further, in *The Owl and the Nightingale* religious traditions were boldly confronted with new-born ideas, and the case for Love was established beyond all dispute.

The religious writings of the time may be divided into four sections according to the aims which they severally have in view. The purport of the first is to teach Biblical history, the second to exhort to holier living; the third is connected with the religious life of women; the last with the Virgin cult and mysticism.

Of the several attempts at scriptural exposition *Ormulum* is the most considerable. The power of literary appeal displayed in this work is, intrinsically, of the smallest. Its matter is not

[1] E. S. Prior, *History of Gothic Art in England*, pp. 21—2.

[2] A. Jeanroy, *Les origines de la poésie lyrique en France au Moyen-âge.*

this manuscript at some date after he had filled its pages with French and Italian 'lessons'. This perusal started him thinking about the preface to the poetical dictionary, and he used the blank lower half of the title-leaf to record the outline of the preface as it became formulated in his mind.

What is the significance of this outline? Historically it is a link in the development of the organic concept of the history of English Poetry, growing from the past to the present. Judging from the other contents of the manuscript, especially the 'History of English poetry', and from the dialogues in *Polymetis* tracing the history of Roman poetry, Spence's finished preface would have been a landmark in the history of histories of English poetry. The essay reproduced on the following pages deserves that value on its own merits, though being heretofore unpublished, it did not, to the best of our knowledge, influence any of Spence's own generation or those following. The preface to the 'Poetical Dictionary', had it been written as effectively as the *Polymetis*, could have had an importance beyond mere historical position.

Spence did not possess one of the most powerful minds of his generation, but within its limitations it was one of the clearest. Our profession is more indebted to him than to any other Professor of Poetry at Oxford before Thomas Warton.

QUELQUES REMARQUES HIST: sur les Poëtes Anglois.[1]

Gyralde, fameux Auteur Italien, et surtout três sçavant dans l'Histoire de la Poësie, remarque que les Anglois ont toûjours aimé la Poësie, & qu'ils ont toûjours eu des Poëtes celebres.[2] Cet eloge semblera d'abord manquer un peu de verité, à la plûpart des

[1] Because of space limitations it seemed best to print all of Spence's own notes, but to keep other annotation to a minimum.

Spence's notes show that he made extensive use of the following:

Histoire d'Angleterre by Paul de Rapin Thoyras (10 vols., The Hague, 1724).
Commentarie de Scriptoribus Britannicis by John Leland (2 vols., Oxford, 1709).
Réflexions Critiques Sur la Poësie et Sur La Peinture by Jean Baptiste Du Bos (3 vols., Utrecht, 1732).
Traité de l'Origine des Romans by Pierre Daniel Huet (1671).

Other single references are specific enough, so that the trained student can locate them should he have occasion to do so. Nearly all of the early poets are described by Leland, and can be easily found, thanks to Anthony Hall's helpful indexes. Similarly, it is often interesting to compare Spence's remarks in the *Anecdotes*, on various poets, with the comments in this history; this is easily accomplished by using the index in Singer's edition.

[2] Quoted by Leland, op. cit., p. 17.

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[1] E. S. Prior, *History of Gothic Art in England*, pp. 21—2.

[2] A. Jeanroy, *Les origines de la poésie lyrique en France au Moyen-âge.*

rapporte: & comme cet auteur avoit un grand penchant à faire des contes, je croirois facilement que ces vers sont supposés, s'ils étoient plus mauvais, qu'ils ne sont pas. Mais en verité ils surpassent le gout de Geoffroy lui-même, et peutêtre de tous ses contemporains.

Aquila & *Perdix* sont apparemment des noms imaginés; & leurs noms reéls sont à present inconnus. Quels qu'ils soient, leurs poëmes étoient tout prophetiques; comme ceux aussi du fameux *Merlin*. Nos Ecrivains vulgaires parlent de trois Merlins: mais les Savans les reduisent à un seul, qu'ils mettent au milieu du sixiéme siécle. Dans ces tems-là personne n'a acquis une plus haute reputation en son païs que *Thaliessin*.[1] Il étoit de la Province des Galles. Les Gallois conservent encore de ses poëmes; & les chantent quelque fois, avec beaucoup de loüanges.[2]

VII. *Cedmon* vecût dans le septiéme siécle.[3] Brute, & ignorant, qu'il étoit; il fut inspiré tout d'un coup de l'amour de la Poësie, comme on dit, dans un songe. Ce conte est de même trempe avec celui-ci d'Hesiode parmi les Grecs. Ce qui est certain c'est, qu'au lieu d'un bon marmiton, il se fit un poëte celebre. Il quitte la broche tres subitement, pour faire des vers; & composa des piéces surprenantes.

VIII. Dans le siécle suivant, *Aldhelme*,[4] neveu du roi Ina,[5] rapporta de Rome l'usage des vers Latins en Angleterre. Ce même siécle a donné au monde *Bede*, qu'on appelle le Venerable, et *Albine*, de qui Charles le Grand s'est servi particulierement pour le premier etablissement d'une Université à Paris.

[1] '*Thelesin*, que quelques uns mettent au nombre de Bardes, à cause des Propheties en vers qu'il a composées, & qui l'on dit avoir vescu vers le milieu du 6 Siécle; & *Melkin*, qui fut un peu plus jeune, écriverent l'Histoire de la grand' Bretagne, leur patrie; du Roi Artus; & de la Table Ronde; & la défigurerent de mille fables: comme Balaeus le reconnoit dans son Catalogue, ou il leur a donné place. Huet; (d l'orig: de Romans, p: 154. Ed: 8.) Shakespeare speaks of y^e Welch Poets Henry, 4 (P. 1.) A, 3. Sc: 1. W^t Glendower says & Hotspur's answer.' [Spence.]

[2] '(Some of our History taken from old Songs, Rap: T, 1. p: 280. 4^to Fr. Q?)' [Spence.]

[3] '*Theodore*, a Greek, Native of Tharsus & ArchB^p of Canterbury: He was consecrated & sent from Rome to y^t See; & Adrian, a Roman, with him. He founded a School at Greecklade; where he & Adrian taught Theology, Music, Arithmetic, & y^e Greek & Lat: tongues. Bede knew some of his scholars; who, he says, c^d talk those two Languages, as well as their mother tongue. He brought several books into England, & wrote too [*sic*] himself. Fragments of his works were publ^d at Paris 1677, with notes by Petit. He died in 690. Rap: T: 1, p: 199. 4^to. See Du Pin?' [Spence.]

[4] 'The first of y^e Saxons y^t wrote in Latin. Rap: T: 1, p: 216. 4^to.' [Spence.]

[5] 'Ina founded the English College at Rome in 727. Rap: T, 1. p, 177. Ethelwolph, rebuilded y^e English College at Rome (which was founded by Ina, & enlargd by Ossa) more more magnificently than ever, in 855. It had been destroyed by Fire. Rap: T. 1. p. 246. 4^to Fr.' [Spence.]

strained conceits as would have made the work a veritable goldmine for seventeenth century intellect. Most illuminating as to this fanciful treatment is his handling of the name of Jesus (l. 4302). Of the human and personal element the work contains but little. The simple modesty of the author's nature is revealed when he fears his limitations and his inadequacy for the task. Otherwise, the passionless temperament of the monk is felt in every line as the work ambles along, innocent of all poetic exaltation, and given over completely to pious moralisings. He shows a great regard for scholarly exactitude; but this, in excess, becomes mere pedantry, and, indeed, his scruples often cause him to linger needlessly over trifles in the text and to indulge in aimless repetitions which prove exhausting. As a monument of industry the work is beyond all praise. Its peculiar orthography, carefully sustained through 10,000 long lines, is the joy of the philologist, though aesthetically it is open to grave objection. By his method of doubling every consonant immediately following a short vowel, Orm furnishes most valuable evidence regarding vowel-length at a critical period of the language. It is doubtful whether he was well advised in choosing verse of any kind as the form of his ponderous work; but it must, at least, be conceded that the verse which he did adopt—the iambic *septenarius*—was not the least suitable for the purpose he had in view. It was the simplest of Latin metres, and Orm's mechanical handling certainly involves no great complexities. He allows himself no licences. The line invariably consists of fifteen syllables and is devoid of either riming or alliterative ornament. The former might possibly, in the author's opinion, have tended to detract from the severity of the theme; the latter must have appeared too vigorous for the tone desired. Except for his versification, Orm, as compared with Old English writers, appears to have forgotten nothing, to have learnt nothing. Equally blind to the uses of Romance vocabulary and conservative in thought, Orm is but a relic of the past in an age fast hurrying on to new forms and new ideas.

Other attempts at teaching Biblical history are to be found in the *Genesis and Exodus* poems and in the shorter poems called *The Passion of Our Lord* and *The Woman of Samaria*. In the *Genesis and Exodus* poems may be seen a renewal of the earlier method of telling Bible stories in "londes speche and wordes smale." They are probably by one and the same author[1], who wrote about 1250

[1] Fritzsche, *Angl.* v, 42—93, and Ten Brink, *History of English Literature*, Vol. I, Appendix F.

Pendant tout ce tems, la langue Angloise n'existoit pas encore. Le dernier siécle fut un *siécle de Poëtes Latins: et tous les precedens* n'avoient produit que des Poëtes *ou* Latins ou Saxons. La Conquête a introduit des alterations dans le Langage, aussi grandes que dans l'Etât. Après tant de confusions, & tant de mêlanges, il falloit un grand espace de tems pour lui donner quelque forme assez reguliere.

XIV. Le Chevalier *Chaucier* est le premier qui a travaillé avec succés. Chaucier étoit d'un naturel heureux, et bien cultivé. Il avoit beaucoup d'esprit, & de discernement. C'étoit un homme de Cour: & le Roi s'est servi de lui en trois Ambassades. Il joüissoit de três grands biens. Enfin il ne lui manquoit rien pour devinir poli. Ses Ouvrages sentent de sa politesse. Ils sont pleins de Descriptions *& de Caractéres: & il est* peutêtre le premier qui ait fait des Contes Poëtiques, du stile qu'on appelle à present le stile Naif. *Gower* fût son Contemporain: mais il lui manque cette vivacité d'esprit, et cette force à dépeindre, que nous voyons avec tant d'admiration dans tous les traits de ce pere de notre Poësie Angloise.[1]

XV. Dans le siécle quinziéme, à peine trouveroit on quelqu'un qui ait réussi en poësie Angloise: si on excepte l'auteur de *Pierce le Laboureur*. Il y avoit alors une Partie des hommes qui voyagoient ensemble; & qui profitoient beaucoup en Italie des Lecons publiques d'un Guarini qui etoit bien fameux dans ce tems.[2] Mais ils ont ecrit tous en Latin. *Flemyng* et *Phreas* semblent etre les plus celebres de tous ceux-ci. Leland donne des loüanges, extraordinaires à un certain de ses Contemperains nomme Widdois ou *Viduus*, a cause de son poëme sur le fameux Edoüard, Prince de Galles.[3] Ce poëme est aussi écrit en Latin.

XVI. Dans le commencement du siécle suivant, Milord *Vaux*, et les Chevaliers *Brian* & *Vyate*, ont acquis quelque reputation: mais le Comte de *Surrey* étoit le premier Genie de ce tems. Il est encore regardé comme un homme d'Esprit. Ils etoient tous Poëtes Lyriques,

into things, that he walk'd most of the way frō his own home to the Vatican: he was perpetually transcribing out of Manuscripts &c, there. A good clever man.' [Spence.]

[1] 'Rem: A. Our first Poetry was chiefly either of the Lyric or y[e] Satirical kind: both of w[ch] Fashions were probably deriv'd *from* y[e] *Italians, as they receiv'd them* frō the Provençals.—Gugl: Figuiera (Cresc: or Notr: Art: 45:) was call'd il Poeta Satirico. He wrote always against ill Princes; & there's a Poem of his in particular entitled, Lo Flagel *mortal des Tirans. This was the general Practice of the* Provençal Poets in his time, from 1200 to 1300; & so on, all y[e] while? the Popes were settled at Avignon. Hence many things in Chaucer; Piers Plowman; y[e] Mirrour for Magistrates, &c.' [Spence.]

[2] 'Y[e] famous Guarini was not born till 1538. Was not this y[t] Guarini of Verona (p: 72 posth:) that publish'd Strabo, & dedicated it to Nic: V? His Papacy was frō 1447 to 1455.' [Spence.]

[3] 'Widdows, Canon of Wells.' [Spence.] See Leland, op. cit., pp. 484–6. Phreas is John Free, described by Leland, pp. 466–8.

frequently follow up their indictment with the argument of terror, after the fashion of *Poema Morale*. Material for thundering of this sort lay ready to hand in medieval compositions connected with the subjects of doomsday, death and hell, such as the Old English *De Domes Daege*, *The Address of the Soul to the Body* and *The Vision of St Paul*. In the poem called *Doomsday* and in the work *On Serving Christ* the first of these themes is logically pursued. The clearest use of *The Address* motive appears in the poem *Death*, the sequence of ideas observed in *The Address* being here preserved[1], while, in addition, the theme is slightly developed. Other reminiscences of the same motive also appear in the fragmentary *Signs of Death* and in *Sinners Beware* (ll. 331 ff.). Of *The Vision of St Paul* traces are clearly seen in *The XI Pains of Hell*. The depicting of hell was a favourite medieval exercise, and *The Vision* is found in several languages. The archangel Michael is represented as conducting St Paul into the gloomy abode, and Dante's journey under Vergil's guidance is merely a variation of this theme. *The Vision* can be traced in the twelfth century homily *In Diebus Dominicis*, where sabbath-breakers are warned. In *The XI Pains of Hell*—a poem in riming couplets—the treatment is modified by the addition of the popular *Address* element. A lost soul describes the place of torment for St Paul's benefit, whereas in *The Vision* the description proceeds from the apostle himself.

Besides satire and arguments of terror, allegory was employed for the same didactic end, notably in the *Bestiary*, *An Bispel* (a Parable) and *Sawles Warde*, each of which was based on a Latin original. The *Bestiary* is founded on the Latin *Physiologus* of one Thetbaldus, though earlier specimens had appeared in Old English and Anglo-French. Of the thirteen animals dealt with, twelve are taken from the work of Thetbaldus, the section relating to the dove from Neckam's *De Naturis Rerum* (I, 56). The method of teaching is venerable but effective; the habits of animals are made to symbolise spiritual truth. The work does not, however, represent much originality, though the metrical form is a blending of old and new. Its six-syllable couplet is derived either from the Latin hexameters of the original or from Philippe de Thaon's couplet, with which it is identical. But the treatment is far from regular; alliteration, rime and assonance are promiscuously used, and syllabic equivalence is but

[1] *Mod. Lang. Notes* (1890), p. 193.

Pendant tout ce tems, la langue Angloise n'existoit pas encore. Le dernier siécle fut un siécle de Poëtes Latins: et tous les precedens n'avoient produit que des Poëtes ou Latins ou Saxons. La Conquête a introduit des alterations dans le Langage, aussi grandes que dans l'Etât. Après tant de confusions, & tant de mêlanges, il falloit un grand espace de tems pour lui donner quelque forme assez reguliere.

XIV. Le Chevalier *Chaucier* est le premier qui a travaillé avec succés. Chaucier étoit d'un naturel heureux, et bien cultivé. Il avoit beaucoup d'esprit, & de discernement. C'étoit un homme de Cour: & le Roi s'est servi de lui en trois Ambassades. Il joüissoit de três grands biens. Enfin il ne lui manquoit rien pour devinir poli. Ses Ouvrages sentent de sa politesse. Ils sont pleins de Descriptions & de Caractéres: & il est peutêtre le premier qui ait fait des Contes Poëtiques, du stile qu'on appelle à present le stile Naif. *Gower* fût son Contemporain: mais il lui manque cette vivacité d'esprit, et cette force à dépeindre, que nous voyons avec tant d'admiration dans tous les traits de ce pere de notre Poësie Angloise.[1]

XV. Dans le siécle quinziéme, à peine trouveroit on quelqu'un qui ait réussi en poësie Angloise: si on excepte l'auteur de *Pierce le Laboureur*. Il y avoit alors une Partie des hommes qui voyagoient ensemble; & qui profitoient beaucoup en Italie des Lecons publiques d'un Guarini qui etoit bien fameux dans ce tems.[2] Mais ils ont ecrit tous en Latin. *Flemyng* et *Phreas* semblent etre les plus celebres de tous ceux-ci. Leland donne des loüanges, extraordinaires à un certain de ses Contemperains nomme Widdois ou *Viduus*, a cause de son poëme sur le fameux Edoüard, Prince de Galles.[3] Ce poëme est aussi écrit en Latin.

XVI. Dans le commencement du siécle suivant, Milord *Vaux*, et les Chevaliers *Brian* & *Vyate*, ont acquis quelque reputation: mais le Comte de *Surrey* étoit le premier Genie de ce tems. Il est encore regardé comme un homme d'Esprit. Ils etoient tous Poëtes Lyriques,

into things, that he walk'd most of the way frō his own home to the Vatican: he was perpetually transcribing out of Manuscripts &c, there. A good clever man.' [Spence.]

[1] 'Rem: A. Our first Poetry was chiefly either of the Lyric or y^e Satirical kind: both of w^ch Fashions were probably deriv'd from y^e Italians, as they receiv'd them frō the Provençals.—Gugl: Figuiera (Cresc: or Notr: Art: 45:) was call'd il Poeta Satirico. He wrote always against ill Princes; & there's a Poem of his in particular entitled, Lo Flagel mortal des Tirans. This was the general Practice of the Provençal Poets in his time, from 1200 to 1300; & so on, all y^e while? the Popes were settled at Avignon. Hence many things in Chaucer; Piers Plowman; y^e Mirrour for Magistrates, &c.' [Spence.]

[2] 'Y^e famous Guarini was not born till 1538. Was not this y^t Guarini of Verona (p: 72 posth:) that publish'd Strabo, & dedicated it to Nic: V? His Papacy was frō 1447 to 1455.' [Spence.]

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The third section of the religious writings of this period is wholly concerned with the religious life of women. The twelfth century, the golden age of monasticism, witnessed also an increased sympathy with convent life; and this is evident not only from the letters of Ailred, but also from the increasing frequency with which legacies were left to convent communities, and from the founding of such an order as that of St Gilbert of Sempringham[1]. Before the Conquest religious women had been by no means a negligible quantity. The revival of interest in their cause, at this later date, was part of that impulse which had inspired, on the continent, the mystical writers St Hildegard of Bingen, St Elisabeth of Schönau and the philanthropic zeal of the noble Hedwig. In the thirteenth century, the convent of Helfta in Saxony was the centre of these tendencies; and, though it cannot be said with certainty that England produced any women-writers, yet the attention to practical religion and mystical thought, which had been the subjects of zeal abroad, are tolerably well represented in the writings *for* women in England.

Hali Meidenhad and the *Lives of the Saints* are connected with this movement by the incitement they furnish to convent life. The former, an alliterative prose homily, is based on the text of *Psalm* xlv. 10; but the methods of the writer are entirely wanting in that gentle grace and persuasion which are found elsewhere. He sets forth his arguments in a coarse, repellent manner. Where others dwell on the beauty of cloistered affection, he derides rather gracelessly the troubles of the married state; and, if these troubles are related with something like humour, it is of a grim kind and easily slides into odious invective. Maidenly ideals are exalted in more becoming fashion in the *Lives of the Saints*, which appeared about the same date. They consist of three rhythmical alliterative prose lives of St Margaret, St Katharine and St Juliana, based on Latin originals. Saintly legends had revived in England in the early thirteenth century, and were already taking the place of the homily in the services of the church. With the later multiplying of themes a distinct falling-off in point of style became visible. Of the three lives, that of *St Katharine* is, in some respects, the most attractive. As compared with its original, the character of the saint becomes somewhat softened and refined in the English version. She has lost something of that impulsiveness, that hardy revengeful spirit which earlier writers had regarded as not inconsistent with the Christian profession. The English

[1] L. Eckenstein, *Woman under Monasticism*, pp. 213 ff.

XVII. Le Siécle dix-septiéme fournit d'abord beaucoup de beaux Esprits, qui étoient preparés sous le siécle precedent. Les meilleurs d'entre eux, étoient des auteurs Dramatiques. Shakespear commençoit donc d'étre dans le plus haut point de sa gloire. Il avoit un Genie tout particulier; & presque inimitable. Sans le secours d'aucunes regles, il devint plus agreable que les artistes les plus reguliers. L'excellence de ce grand homme éclate le plus, dans l'Expression, dans la Varieté, dans la Sublime, dans l'Entousiasme, & même dans l'Extravagance de ses caractéres. Il depeint les hommes, de quelque profession & de quelque Humeur qu'ils soient, comme ils doivent étre. Il donne des Rois, qui parlent tous en Rois; et chacun en particulier selon son charactére Historique. Il reüssit parfaitement à peindre des Ecervelés & des Fous de toute sorte: et quand il passe les bornes de la nature, le langage & les manieres d'agir qu'il donne a ses personnages surnaturelles, sont si bien imaginés; que, tout le monde, ignorant si ces charactéres sont vrays croit cependant d'abord qu'ils sont vraysemblables. *Johnson* étoit plus docte.[1] Il est en plusiers endroits, un Copiste des Anciens. Sa maniére est souvent dure, & trop étudiée. Mais il excelle dans ce que nous appellons en Anglois, *Humour*; c'est à dire, en conservant partout les traits particuliers de quelques caracteres bizarres toujours bien remarkables, & quelquefois mêmes en outres.

Fletcher au meme tems releva beaucoup le Théatre. Il s'associa avec *Beaumont* dans une partie de ses ouvrages. Ils étoient, l'un et l'autre, d'une naissance assez noble; et écrivoient plus en Gentils-hommes que les precedens. Fletcher donnoit des vers avec rapidité; mais Beaumont le surpassoit en traçant des desseins. L'un avoit le jugement plus solide; l'autre avoit beaucoup plus de vivacité &

[1] 'The different manners of three of our best Poets in expressing the very same thought; i.e. their opinion of Johnson & Shakespear.

Y[e] easy enlivened style

The sweat of Learned Johnson's brain,
And gentle Shakespear's easier strain,
A Hackney coach conveys us to,
In spite of all that Rain can do.

Suckling.

Y[e] simple

What frō Johnson's oil & sweat did flow,
Or what more easy nature did bestow
On Shakespear's gentler Muse.

Denham.

Y[e] metaphoric or exalted

Then to ye well trod Stage anon,
If Johnson's learned Sock be on;
Or sweetest Shakespear, fancy's child,
Warble his native Wood-notes wild.

Milton.' [Spence.]

certain degree of indebtedness. The treatise opens with a preface, which summarises the contents; sections I and VIII refer to external matters, to religious ceremonies and domestic affairs; sections II—VII to the inward life. The work has much that is medieval commonplace, an abundance of well-digested learning, borrowings from Anselm and Augustine, Bernard and Gregory, and illustrations which reveal a considerable acquaintance with animal and plant lore. The author also betrays those learned tendencies which gloried in subtle distinctions. There is the ancient delight in allegorical teaching: Biblical names are made to reveal hidden truths: a play upon words can suggest a precept. And, alongside of all this, which is severely pedantic, there is much that is quaint and picturesque. Traces are not wanting of a vein of mysticism. Courtly motives occasionally receive a spiritual adaptation, and, here and there, are touches of those romantic conceptions which were elsewhere engaged in softening the severity of religious verse. The writer, then, is possessed of the learning of the age, its methods of teaching, its mystical and romantic tendencies. And yet these facts are far from altogether explaining the charm of the work, its power of appeal to modern readers. The charm lies rather in the writer's individuality, in his gentle refinement and lovable nature. The keynote of the whole work seems to be struck in that part of the preface where the sisters, belonging as they did to no order of nuns, are instructed to claim for themselves the order of St James. The work is animated by the "pure religion and undefiled" of that apostle, and is instinct with lofty morality and infinite tenderness. The writer's instructions as to ceremonies and observances are broad-minded and reasonable; his remarks on love reveal the sweetness and light which dwelt in his soul. The prose style from the historical standpoint is of very great merit. The ancient fetters are not quite discarded; there is still constraint and a want of suppleness; but there are also signs that the limping gait is acquiring freedom. The style, moreover, is earnest, fresh and touched with the charm of the sentiment it clothes. Above all it is naive: the writer occasionally reaches the heart, while provoking a smile.

Closely connected with this woman-literature are those works which belong to the Virgin cult and those which are touched with erotic mysticism. This section is the outcome of those chivalrous ideals which had dawned in the twelfth century, to soften the harshness of earlier heroics and to refine the relation between the sexes. These new ideals coloured the atmosphere of co

ouvrages, son Epique surpasse par la grandeur de la matiér chef-d'oeuvres et d'Homere & de Virgile. Son sujet est presque surnaturel. Ses personnages humains mêmes sont hors de la na comme nous la voyons à present. Tout cela ressent trop le mau goût des Italiens. Mais il y a tant de magnificence, & tan simplicité ou il en faut, dans son poëme, qu'il est admirable, m dans ses erreurs.

Dryden, acquit toute sa reputation dans ce tems, que j'appe nôtre siécle Augustain. Il a travaillé presque de toutes sortes Poësie. Ses Satyres sont les plus fortes de ses pieces; comme s Contes sont les plus agreables. De trente ou quarante Piéces d Theatre, qu'il a écrites, il n'y en a que trois ou quatre qu'on approuv à present. Ses traductions ont beaucoup de feu Poëtique: mais elle manquent quelquefois de justesse. Tout le monde sçait son indigenc & que sa plume fut contrainte d'obeir à la tyrannie d'un impertinent Libraire. En particulier dans sa traduction de Virgile, il se trouva obligé de remplir la plûpart de ses feuilles au coup d'oeil de ces gens-là. Malgré tout cela, ses traductions sont des plus spirituelles que nous avons dans nôtre langage. Enfin, il surpassa tous ses rivaux dans la perfection de la Versification; il releva beaucoup nôtre poësie, et nôtre langage: & devint apparemment le premier poëte de son tems.

Cette Periode fut três feconde en Satire.[1] Outre le grand Dryden, elle produisit Dorset, Rochester, Oldham, Buckingam, et Butler. *Butler*, fut inimitable dans une épece de Burlesque Satyrique, três particulier, & três ingenieux. *Buckingham*, est encore regardé comme l'auteur d'une fameuse Piéce de Théatre, qui s'appelle le *Rehearsal*, toute pleine de Satyre & d'Esprit. *Oldham*, écrivit d'une maniere três forte & três severe. *Rochester*, fut plus clairvoyant sur les caractéres des hommes; il eût une force plus penetrante & plus poliё.[2]

[1] 'Wt Machiavel says in dispraise of his countrymen, was one of ye Chief Recom[m]endations in Charles II Court. That Tornarono i cittadini al loro consuelo modo di vivere pensando di godersi senza alcun rispetto quello Stato che s'havevano stabilito e fermo. Di che ne nacquero alla città quelli mali che sogliono nelle paci il più delle volte generarsi; perche i giovani piu sciolti che l'usitato, in vestire, in conviti, in altri simili lascivie sopra modo spendevano: e essendo otiosi, in giuochi e in femine il tempo e le sustanze consumavano. E gli studii loro erano apparire col vestire splendidi, e col parlare sagaci e astuti; e quello, che più destramente mordeva gli altri, era più savio e da più stimato. Flor: Hist: lib: 7, p: 407.

Ks Charles, Reign was an Age of Wit. A great aim of the Men in Fashion was to shine in conversation. Nothing takes so easily or passes so soon for Wit as what is severe: this might make Satirical Strokes ye most com[m]on topic then: as that may account for so many of the Poets of yt Age being Satirists.' [Spence.]

[2] 'Jamais aucun Tragique Grec ne tâcha de rendre les Souverains odieux autant que My lord Comte de Rochester l'a voulu faire dans sa Tragedie de Valentinien. Boze (Poet: & Pg) V: 1. § 20.' [Spence.]

Erotic mysticism is best represented by the *Luve Ron* of Thomas de Hales, a delightful lyric in eight-line stanzas, written in the earlier portion of the reign of Henry III, and, probably, before 1240 judging from the allusion in ll. 97 ff. The writer was a native of Hales (Gloucester), who, after a career at Paris and Oxford, attained considerable distinction as a scholar. The main theme of the work is the perfect love which abides with Christ and the joy and peace of mystic union with Him. The poem is full of lofty devotion and passionate yearning; its deep seriousness is conveyed through a medium tender and refined, and it is, in short, one of the most attractive and impassioned works of the time, as the following extracts suggest:

> Maydê her þu myht biholde,
> þis worldes luue nys bute o res,
> And is by-set so felê-volde,
> Vikel and frakel and wok and les.
> þeos þeines þat her weren bolde
> Beoþ aglyden, so wyndes bles:
> Under molde hi liggeþ colde,
> And falceweþ so doþ medewe gres.
>
> . . . .
>
> Hwer is Paris and Heleyne
> þat weren so bryht and feyre on bleo:
> Amadas, Tristram, and Dideyne
> Yseudê and allê þeo:
> Ector wiþ his scharpê meyne
> And Cesar riche of wor[l]des feo?
> Heo beoþ iglyden ut of þe reyne,
> So þe schef is of þe cleo[1].

The three prose prayers, *The Wohung of ure Lauerd, On Lofsong of ure Louerde* and *On Ureisun of ure Louerde*, belong to the same category as the *Luve Ron*. They are written in an alliterative prose[2], which aimed at obtaining the emphatic movement of Old English verse, and is most effective in recitation, though the absence of metrical rules brings about a looser structure. All three prayers consist of passionate entreaties for closer communion with Christ, and the personal feeling revealed in them illustrates the use of the love motive in the service of religion. But to interpret the love terminology literally and to connect these prayers solely with the devotions of nuns, as one critic suggests, seems to involve a misapprehension of their tone, for it infuses

[1] Ll. 9—16; 65—72. *o res*, passing, transitory. *frakel*, base. *wok*, feeble. *les*, false. *bles*, blast. *meyne*, might. *feo*, wealth. *schef of þe cleo*, corn from the hill side.

[2] Cf. Hwa ne mei luue þi luueli leor?

sur diverses sujets; & qu'on ne peut mettre dans aucune classe reguliére: comme *Sidley*, bien touchant dans ses piéces amoreuses; *Scrope*, pas mal tourné pour la satire; & un grand nombre d'autres.

XVIII. Le Siécle present a plusieurs noms dont la Posterité lui sera redevable. *Addison* est un des premiers de ceux-ci: quoi qu'il faille avouer, qu'il a beaucoup mieux réüssi à la prose qu'à la poësie. Milord *Lansdown* a suivi la maniere de Waller, & est à present le premier de nos Lyriques. Pour les vers Latins, *Dibben* & *Bourne* surpassent tous les autres: & celui-ci peutêtre ne cede pas à quelqu'un parmi les Italiens mêmes, dans la facilité & la netteté de la Poësie Latine.

Pour le Théatre, nous n'avons personne qui peut en meriter le nom d'un auteur general: mais il y en a plusieurs qui ont écrits une ou deux pieces avec quelque succés. Tels sont Addison, *Steele*, *Vanbrugh*, et *Cibber* pour la Comedie; le même Addison, *Trap*, *Smith*, *Heughs*, & le jeune *Philips* pour la Tragedie. *Rowe*, l'excellent Traducteur de Lucain, fut aussi le Premier poëte Tragique de son tems; & il y a bien de l'apparence que *Heughes* lui auroit succedé, si sa vie n'eût pas été si courte.

Dans les ouvrages d'Esprit *Pryor* étoit três naif & três charmant. Il est le De-la-Fontaine d'Angleterre. *Garth*, dans sa Dispensarie, a bien imité le Lutrin de Boileau: mais il est trop addonné aux jeux d'esprit & aux antitheses perpetuelles. *Gay* aime presque toûjours a se jouër des autres Poëtes. Ses Comedies sont de Satires sur les Comedies: & ses Pastorales sont faites pour rendre ridicules celles du Jeune Philips. Il a ecrit des Contes, comme a fait aussie le feu *Parnelle*; mais celui-ci est toûjours trop dur; & celui-là, dans quelques unes de ses pieces, est trop bas. *King* se sert tres heureusament d'un ridicule particulier: mais Dr. *Swift* est l'homme du monde le mieux porté pour le Ridicule, & le plus propre à faire un Triumvirat avec Cervantes & Rablais. Le vieux *Philips* étoit le meilleur imitateur du Stile du grand Milton comme *Thomson* l'est à present. *Young* est plus heureux dans ses Satires, que dans ses autres ecrits; & *Pitt*, outre plusieurs beaux poëmes, a fait une traduction de Vida qui est três bonne. Le Premier Poëte de ce siécle, ou en Angleterre, ou ailleurs, est Monsr. *Pope*: qui a écrit presque en toutes ces sortes de Poësie; & qui a surpassé presque tous ces particuliers, dans leur propre maniere d'écrire.

Erotic mysticism is best represented by the *Luve Ron* of Thomas de Hales, a delightful lyric in eight-line stanzas, written in the earlier portion of the reign of Henry III, and, probably, before 1240 judging from the allusion in ll. 97 ff. The writer was a native of Hales (Gloucester), who, after a career at Paris and Oxford, attained considerable distinction as a scholar. The main theme of the work is the perfect love which abides with Christ and the joy and peace of mystic union with Him. The poem is full of lofty devotion and passionate yearning; its deep seriousness is conveyed through a medium tender and refined, and it is, in short, one of the most attractive and impassioned works of the time, as the following extracts suggest:

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. . . .

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[2] Cf. Hwa ne mei luue þi lufsum leor?

These two last facts mean, I take it, not that Dryden is a better poet than Pope but partly at least that Dryden belongs to the seventeenth century as well as to the eighteenth; that his poetic style and temper are strongly tinged by qualities which suggest those of some of his predecessors but have been purged away in Pope. After 'Annus Mirabilis' he never again (except in the Heroic plays) permitted the pursuit of conceits to lead him into howling absurdity; but to the very end some of his best and most characteristic effects depend upon either ambiguities or *concordia discordia*, both of which suggest his predecessors rather than his descendants. Pope neither could nor would have written the tantalizing obscure line 'Your chase had a beast in view' which, significantly, opens the stanza Mr. Eliot chose for especial admiration. The last section of the Ode to Mistress Anne Killigrew, with its elaboration of a fantasy suggested by the dogma of the resurrection of the body, is certainly very far from being Augustan, and in the same poem so characteristic a phrase as 'the last promotions of the blessed' represents precisely the kind of deliberate incongruity which many seventeenth-century poets sought, but which Pope would have avoided as a violation of propriety. Even in the satires the thing which most clearly distinguishes Dryden's manner from that of Pope is the choice of words and images which are grotesque rather than decorous. Dryden, in other words, often strives to surprise and shock; Pope, most characteristically, to assume that perfect aptness alone is the ideal.

The conclusion I wish to draw is simply that some appreciation of Dryden does not necessarily mean a real liking for the unique excellences of Augustan poetry and that the tendency to prefer him to Pope can be, probably often is, no more than another indication of the fact that Pope's poetry has not 'come back' as completely as we sometimes like to assume. Those of us who are convinced that it is great and unique in an important way have not entirely succeeded in persuading any very large public of the fact; certainly have not succeeded—as the admirers of Metaphysical poetry did, when they revived a poetic taste—in making Pope's poetry an important influence on contemporary writing. Either the temper of our times is such that the fundamental aims and methods of Augustan poetry cannot make a very strong appeal, or those of us who have undertaken to recommend it have to some extent failed—perhaps merely

than a conventional recognition of a venerable work which dealt with a kindred subject. Convention rather than fact also lay behind his statement that he had consulted works in three different languages.

His debt to Wace, however, is beyond all doubt[1]. Innumerable details are common to both works, and, moreover, it is clear that it is Wace's work rather than Wace's original (Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*) that has been laid under contribution[2]. In the first place, Wace and Layamon have certain details in common which are lacking in the work of Geoffrey; in the matter of omissions Wace and Layamon frequently agree as opposed to Geoffrey; while again they often agree in differing from the Latin narrative in regard to place and personal names. But if Wace's *Brut* forms the groundwork of Layamon's work, in the latter there are numerous details, not accounted for by the original, which have generally been attributed to Celtic (*i.e.* Welsh) influences. Many of these details, however, have recently been shown to be non-Welsh. The name of Argante the elf-queen, as well as that of Modred, for instance, point to other than Welsh territory. The traits added to the character of Arthur are in direct opposition to what is known of Welsh tradition. The elements of the Arthurian saga relating to the Round Table are known to have been treated as spurious by Welsh writers; Tysilio, in his *Brut*, for instance, passes them over. Therefore the explanation of this additional matter in Layamon, as compared with Wace, must be sought for in other than Welsh material[3].

Hitherto, when Wace's *Brut* has been mentioned, it has been tacitly assumed that the printed version of that work was meant, rather than one of those numerous versions which either remain in manuscript or have since disappeared. One MS (Add. 32,125. Brit. Mus.), however, will be found to explain certain name-forms, concerning which Layamon is in conflict with the printed Wace. And other later works, such as the Anglo-French *Brut* (thirteenth or fourteenth century) and the English metrical *Mort Arthur*, both of which are based on unprinted versions of Wace, contain material which is present in Layamon, namely, details connected with the stories of Lear, Merlin and Arthur. Therefore it seems possible that Layamon, like the authors of the later works, used one of the variant texts. Further, the general nature of Layamon's additions

[1] Cf. *post*, Chapter XII, pp. 265 ff. [2] R. Wülker, P.B.B III, pp 530 ff.

[3] For the main points contained in the discussion of Layamon's sources see Imelmann, *Layamon, Versuch über seine Quellen*.

subscribe. But for reasons political, sociological, psychological, and philosophical, we can imitate, or at least learn from, the former but not the latter. Donne and Herbert are, but Pope is not—at least to anything like the same extent—part of our 'usable past'.

Now I have no intention of undertaking the alarming task of attempting to examine the extent to which all this is necessarily true or need remain so. That modern poets have used the Metaphysicals much and the Augustans very little is an obvious fact. But it is obvious also that if they could use the latter more, the effect would certainly be to make them accessible to a far wider audience than at present they have, and I am raising the question whether the case for Pope and, therefore, the possibility that he might be more 'usable' than is commonly assumed, has been presented as effectively as it might be, either on the high level of the best criticism, or on the lower level of class-room presentation to the undergraduates who are, after all, to-morrow's poets and readers of poetry.

When Dryden decided to become a professional poet he had immediately at hand neither an audience, a subject-matter, nor a style, and in this respect his situation was not unlike that of the earliest Post-Georgians. In Dryden's youth the Metaphysical school was moribund and the Elizabethan already so remote that its themes and its vocabulary were as unusable for him as those of the Victorian age were for the Post-Georgians. If Dryden was to make a living either directly or indirectly as a poet, he had to have an audience which would buy new verses in numbers at least sufficient to encourage a printer to print them. Unlike the Post-Georgians he proceeded to supply himself with a subject-matter, a style, and an audience in the most prosaically practical manner. Whereas they sought esoteric subjects, imitated the most difficult contemporary French as well as the most difficult of the earlier English writers, and sought the suffrage of a small cult, he chose journalistic subjects for which there was a ready-made public, and evolved a style so clear, so direct, and so accessible to the ordinary reader that to some it seems mere prose. That it is not actually mere prose is due partly to the fact that he continued to use sparingly and temperately certain characteristic devices of the Metaphysicals, but more importantly to the further fact that he succeeded in demonstrating how 'the best words in the best order' can be

possession of the ancient vocabulary, with its hosts of synonyms, though the earlier parallelisms which retarded the movement are conspicuously absent. His most resonant lines, like those of his literary ancestors, deal with the conflict of warriors or with that of the elements. In such passages as those which describe the storm that overtook Ursula (II, 74), or the wrestling match between Corineus and the giant (I, 79), he attains the true epic note, while his words gather strength from their alliterative setting. His verse is a compromise between the old and the new. With the Old English line still ringing in his ears, he attempts to regulate the rhythm, and occasionally to adorn his verse with rime or assonance. His device of simile was, no doubt, caught from his original, for many of the images introduced are coloured by the Norman love of the chase, as when a fox-hunt is introduced to depict the hunted condition of Childric (II, 452), or the pursuit of a wild crane by hawks in the fenland to describe the chase after Colgrim (II, 422). The poet, in general, handles his borrowings with accuracy, but he has limitations—perhaps shows impatience—as a scholar. Apart from a totally uncritical attitude—a venial sin in that age—he betrays, at times, a certain ignorance on historical and geographical points. But such anachronisms and irregularities are of little importance in a work of this kind, and do not detract from its literary merits. Other verbal errors suggest that the work of translation was to Layamon not devoid of difficulty. Where Wace indulges in technical terminology, as in his nautical description of Arthur's departure from Southampton, Layamon here and elsewhere solves his linguistic difficulties by a process of frank omission.

The interest which the *Brut* possesses for modern readers arises in part from the fact that much of its material is closely bound up with later English literature. Apart from the Arthurian legend here appear for the first time in English the story of Leir and Kinbelin, Cloten and Arviragus. But the main interest centres round the Arthurian section, with its haunting story of a wondrous birth, heroic deeds and a mysterious end. The grey king appears in a garment of chivalry. As compared with the Arthur of Geoffrey's narrative, his figure has grown in knightliness and splendour. He is endowed with the added traits of noble generosity and heightened sensibility; he has advanced in courtesy; he is the defender of Christianity; he is a lover of law and order. And Layamon's narrative is also interesting historically. It is the work of the first writer of any magnitude in Middle English, and, standing at the entrance to that period, he may be said to look

themselves was actually a part of universal human nature—as Rousseau did in the most famous of all instances when he proclaimed his absolute uniqueness only to discover that half the population of Europe believed itself just like him. That does not, however, change the fact that Pope remains more usable than any use which has recently been made of him would indicate, and it does not dispel the suspicion that the failure to use him is due in part to the operation of motives not wholly creditable to contemporary poets.

The very clearness with which a couplet says what it has to say is notoriously merciless in exposing either emptiness or absurdity—as Dryden often (at least in the Heroic plays) and even Pope, sometimes, demonstrates. Any poet not quite sure whether or not he is saying anything or whether or not what he is saying makes any sense at all is wisely reluctant to expose himself. Even though it be granted that some things can be suggested which can never be said, it still remains true that nonsense half-revealed is less demonstrably nonsense than it would be if plainly stated, and that a bad conceit in the manner of Donne can be argued about in a way that a bad couplet in the manner of Pope cannot.

Ingenuity and obscurity have, moreover, other and more hidden charms. Even the poet who professes without conscious hypocrisy to believe that a wide audience is in itself a desirable thing may, nevertheless, feel the romantic appeal of being rejected and alone. Even the most passionate admirer of the common man may not want to be too common himself, and the desire to be one of an esoteric band may struggle against the desire to speak for one's contemporaries at large. More important still is the fact that modern poetry having become more and more the concern of a special group—Robert Graves announced a year or two ago that he wrote poetry only for other poets—the tendency is more and more to produce poems which will provide that group with opportunities for exegesis and debate.

A very recent book on contemporary criticism[1] seriously proposed that since no single person, not even a single professional critic, could be expected to know enough adequately to interpret or evaluate a poem, criticism should in the future operate principally through panels of critics who will attack poems from

[1] *The Armed Vision*, by Stanley Hyman (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1948).

century it appeared in a balder form in Neckam's *De Naturis Rerum*. Its subsequent popularity is attested by its frequent reappearances in both French and English. The episode, as it appears in *The Owl and the Nightingale*, is due partly to Marie de France, partly to Neckam. There are further details in the poem which are reminiscent of Neckam's *De Naturis Rerum*, while the description of the barbarous north (ll. 999 ff.) is possibly based on a similar description in Alfred's translation of Orosius. The structure of the poem is of a composite kind. The main elements are drawn from the Old French *débat*, but there is also a proverbial element as well as *Bestiary* details, which, though slight in amount, give a colouring to the whole. Of the various kinds of the Old French *débat*, it is the *tençon* in particular upon which the poem is modelled, for that poem, unlike the *jeu-parti*, has no deliberate choice of sides; each opponent undertakes the defence of his nature and kind. And, in addition to the general structure, the poet has borrowed further ideas from this same *genre*, namely, the appointment of judge, suggested by the challenger and commented upon by his opponent; the absence of the promised verdict; the use of certain conventional figures of the Old French *débat*, such as *le jaloux* (cf. ll. 1075 ff.), *la mal mariée* (cf. ll. 1520 ff.), and the adoption of love as the theme of the whole. The proverbial element is derived from the lips of the people, and, of the sixteen maxims, eleven are connected with the name of Alfred. In representing his disputants as members of the bird world, and in interpreting their habits to shadow forth his truths, the poet has adopted the methods of the *Bestiary*. His use of the motive is, however, so far untraditional in that the nightingale, unlike the owl, did not appear in the ancient *Physiologus*.

The main significance of the poem has been subjected to much misconception. Its ultimate intention, as already stated, seems to have been to suggest to English readers a new type of poetry. To the medieval mind the poetic associations of the nightingale were invariably those of love; according to her own description, her song was one of "skentinge" (amusement), and its aim was to teach the nobility of faithful love. She is, however, induced to emphasise (ll. 1347—1450) the didactic side of her singing, in order to meet more successfully her dour opponent; but the emphasis is merely a *passado* in a bout of dialectics, and, further, no inconsistency is involved with her own statement, "And soth hit is of luve ich singe," when mention is made of the ignorance of the barbarous north concerning those love-songs, or of the wantonness at times induced by her passionate music. Her dignified def-

for one another, namely, the approach via the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' own theories, ideals, and critical terms. If, for instance, a transcendental definition of the imagination is admitted, explicitly or by implication, then all is lost; but it need not be admitted because the modern reader is not usually a transcendentalist in regard to anything else, and because modern theories of poetry have prepared him, as the Victorian reader certainly had not been prepared, for a consideration of the problem in terms of memory, fancy, and judgement—in connexion with which terms, incidentally, Freudian concepts can be introduced far more easily than they can as addenda to transcendental theories.

It has been my experience in the classroom that the most effective interpreters of Pope are his contemporaries—for the simple reason that they necessarily operate within the framework of the thought of the age. Johnson's essay on Pope makes the case better than any other single essay does, and the student who resists the contention that the 'Hills peep o'er Hills' passage is one of the greatest in English poetry is more likely to be persuaded by Johnson's simple, rationalistic discussion of it in connexion with the virtues possible to a metaphor than by anything else. If the moderns are called in it had best be their theory rather than their practice which is cited. *The Waste Land* may not be a very good preparation for reading the *Essay on Criticism*, but the student who is familiar with Mr. Eliot's attitude toward tradition may be helped by it to appreciate 'Hail, Bards triumphant'.

I would, in conclusion, go just this one step farther. To the charge that Pope is deficient in 'sensibility' and that he sticks too close to the normal, waking, daylight world to appeal very strongly to a generation proudly neurotic, dissociated, and doubtful, I should be inclined to reply neither with denial nor with apology, but with the forthright assertion that we need, at this moment at least, his qualities rather more than a turning of the face against them. Even sensibility, however good it may be, is good only in so far as it can be disciplined and used, and it seems obvious enough that modern literature has cultivated it to a point where it now has more sensibility than it knows what to do with. No doubt Augustan poetry finally died because it lacked fresh feelings and fresh thoughts. Perhaps romanticism revived poetry by supplying both. But to call now

fallow tints. The nightingale paints a couple of dainty word-pictures when she describes her coming and going. Upon her arrival, she sings,

> þe blostmè ginneþ springe and sprede
> Boþe in treo and ek on mede,
> þe lilie mid hire fairè wlite
> Wolcumeþ me, þat þu wite,
> Bit me, mid hire fairè bleo
> þat ich shulle to hirè fleo.
> þe rose also mid hire rude,
> þat cumeþ ut of þe þornèwude,
> Bit me þat ich shullè singe,
> Vor hire luve, onè skentinge[1].

Her departure takes place amid other scenes:

> *H*wan is ido vor *h*wan ich com,
> Ich fare aȝen and do wisdom:
> *H*wane mon hoȝeþ of his shere,
> And falewi cumeþ on grenè leve,
> Ich farè hom and nimè leve
> Ne recche ich noȝt of winteres reve[2].

Nor is the poem devoid of appreciation of dramatic situation and dramatic methods. The debate is brought to a dramatic climax by the appearance of the wren and his companions, while considerable skill is shown in the characterisation of the two disputants. Brief interludes are introduced for the sake of relief and variety: they also add slight touches by the way to the character sketches. Between the lines may be caught, here and there, glimpses of contemporary life. The festival of Christmas with its carol-services, the *laus perennis* of cathedrals and monasteries, and the daily service of the parish priest, the rampant injustice in the bestowal of livings, the picture of the gambler and the tricks of the ape, all help to give a historical setting. The verse is modelled on French octosyllabics, and the earlier *staccato* movement gives place to a more composed rhythm. As a rule, the rimes are wonderfully correct, and it is instructive to note that the proportion of masculine to feminine rimes is that of 10 : 37. This fact is interesting in connection with Chaucerian work, where the fondness for the feminine form, which is less pronounced than in the present poem, has been ascribed to Italian influences. It is obvious that no such influence is at work here; nor can Old French models have suggested the form, the masculine rime

[1] Ll. 437—46. *wlite*, beauty. *bit*, bids. *rude*, ruddy colour. *skentinge*, piece for amusement.

[2] Ll. 453—8. *hoȝeþ*, takes thought. *nime leve*, take my leave. *reve*, plunder.

A LIST OF THE WRITINGS OF GEORGE SHERBURN

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CHAPTER XII

THE ARTHURIAN LEGEND

"A GRAVE there is for March" (or "Mark")—so runs a stanza in one of the oldest extant Welsh poems[1]—"a grave for Gwythur, a grave for Gwgawn of the Ruddy Sword; a mystery is the grave of Arthur." "Some men say yet," wrote Sir Thomas Malory, many centuries later, "that king Arthur is not dead, but had by the will of our Lord Jesu into another place." The mystery of Arthur's grave still remains unsolved, for

> Where is he who knows?
> From the great deep to the great deep he goes.

Towards the end of the twelfth century, in the very heyday of the British king's renown as a romantic hero, the monks of St Dunstan's at Glastonbury—at the original instance, it is said, of Henry II—professed to have discovered the mortal remains of Arthur in the cemetery of their abbey church[2]. Some sixty years before, William of Malmesbury had given an account of the discovery in Wales of the grave of Arthur's nephew, Gawain, but the grave of Arthur himself was not, he said, anywhere to be found; hence, ancient songs[3] prophesy his return. It was thought that the illusory expectations thus cherished by the British Celts could be dispelled by the Glastonbury exhumation. But so sorry an attempt as this to poison the wells of romance met with the failure it deserved. Arthur lived on, inviolate in fabled Avalon. Graven on no known sepulchre, his name,

> a ghost,
> Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain-peak,
> And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still.

The memory of no other British hero is so extensively preserved as his in the place-names of these islands; "only the devil is more often mentioned in local association than Arthur[4]."

[1] A poem, in triplet form, entitled *The Stanzas of the Graves*, preserved in *The Black Book of Carmarthen*, a MS of the twelfth century.

[2] Giraldus Cambrensis gives the longest account of the affair (*De Principis Instructione*, VIII, 126—9)

[3] *Antiquitas naeniarum*. *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, Bk. III.

[4] Dickinson, *King Arthur in Cornwall* (Longmans, 1900), preface, p vi

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Britain, however, claimed the titular hero of the legend; and it was on British soil that the full flower of Arthurian romance in due course made its appearance. Sir Thomas Malory's marvellous compilation superseded, for all time, each and every "French book" which went to its making. And, as Caxton takes occasion to emphasise in his preface to Malory's book, Arthur, as the "first and chief of the three best Christian kings" of the world, deserved "most to be remembered amongst us Englishmen." It so happens, however, that, in our own, no less than in Caxton's, time, "divers men hold opinion that there was no such Arthur, and that all such books as been made of him be but feigned and fables." There is, indeed, much in the history of the legend to justify the attitude of these sceptics. The first great outburst of the popularity of the story was due to a writer who, in the words of one of his earliest critics[1], "cloaked fables about Arthur under the honest name of history"—Geoffrey of Monmouth. The historical Arthur—assuming that Geoffrey meant all that he wrote about him to be taken as authentic fact—thus made his first considerable appearance in literature under very dubious auspices. The "British book" which Geoffrey professes to have used has never been discovered, and is not unreasonably supposed by many to have been a myth. Thus, they who would substantiate Caxton's assertion that "there was a king of this land called Arthur" have to produce earlier, and more authentic, evidence than anything furnished by Geoffrey.

Old English literature, even the *Chronicle*, knows absolutely nothing of Arthur. Wales, alone, has preserved any record of his name and fame from a date earlier than the twelfth century. But even Welsh writers of an indisputably early date tell us very little about him, and tell that little in a tantalisingly casual and perfunctory way. Yet it is in a few obscure Welsh poems, in one very remarkable but difficult Welsh prose tale and in two meagre Latin chronicles compiled in Wales, that we discover the oldest literary records of both the historical and the legendary Arthur. A few stubborn critics still maintain, against the opinion of the best Welsh scholars, that the Welsh works in question are not, in substance, earlier than the twelfth century—that, in other words, they contain no fragments of Arthurian lore which can be proved to be older than the date of the MSS in which they are preserved. None, however, will now dispute the approximate dates assigned by the best authorities to Nennius and the *Annales*

[1] William of Newburgh.

is translated altogether into the realm of myth. In the Welsh district of Buelt[1], we are told, there is a mound of stones, on the top of which rests a stone bearing the print of a dog's foot. "It was when he was hunting the boar Troit that Cabal, the dog of Arthur the warrior, left this mark upon the stone; and Arthur afterwards gathered together the heap of stones under that which bore his dog's footprint, and called it Carn Cabal." Here we discover an early association of Arthurian fable with the topography of Britain. Another "Marvel" tells of a certain stream called "the source of the Amir," which was so named after "Amir, the son of Arthur the warrior," who was buried near it. The allusion to the hunting of the boar links Nennius's narrative with what is probably the most primitive of all the Welsh Arthurian tales, the story of *Kulhwch and Olwen*[2]. In that fantastic fairy-tale the hunting of the *Twrch Trwyth*, which is Nennius's *porcus Troit*, forms one of the chief incidents, and the hound Cabal there appears under his Welsh name of *Carall*.

The Welsh monk and historian, Gildas, mentions the battle of Mount Badon in his *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae*. That battle, according to Gildas, was signalised by "the last, almost, though not the least, slaughter of our cruel foes, and that was (I am sure) forty-four years and one month after the landing of the Saxons, and also the time of my own nativity." But Gildas makes no allusion at all to Arthur's feats in the battle. Neither does he once mention his name in connection with the general struggle which he describes as being carried on, with varying fortune, against the English. The only leader of the British in that warfare, whom Gildas deems worthy of notice, is Ambrosius Aurelianus[3], the last of the Romans, "a modest man, who alone of all his race chanced to survive the shock of so great a storm" as then broke over Britain. The silence of Gildas, who was, presumably, a contemporary of the historical Arthur, would be significant, were it not that he is equally reticent about the achievements of every other native British chieftain. Gildas belonged to the Roman party in the Britain of his time, and

[1] Builth (modern Welsh, *Buallt*).

[2] Included in Lady Charlotte Guest's *Mabinogion*.

[3] Ambrosius, transformed by Geoffrey into Aurelius Ambrosius (cf. Tennyson, *Coming of Arthur*, "*For first Aurelius lived, and fought and died*"), is known in Welsh literature as *Emrys Wledig*. He appears in Nennius as *Embreis Guletic*. *Guletic*, or *Gwledig*, means "over-lord," or "king," and Arthur himself would seem to bear this title in a Welsh poem in *The Book of Taliesin* (No. xv). See Skene, *Four Ancient Books of Wales*, Vol. i, p. 227.

as *The Black Book of Carmarthen*, compiled during the latter part of the twelfth century, the period to which also belongs the oldest known MS of Welsh prose, that of the Venedotian code of the laws of Wales. *The Book of Aneirin*, which contains the famous *Gododin*, is the next oldest MS, and is probably to be assigned to the thirteenth century. To the thirteenth century, also, belongs *The Book of Taliesin*, while another famous MS, *The Red Book of Hergest*, dates from the end of the fourteenth century. These "four ancient books"[1] constitute, together, our chief available repertory of the early poetry of the Kymry.

Amid much that is undeniably late and spurious, these collections of Welsh poetry contain a good deal that is, in substance, of obviously archaic origin. In many of these poems there is, in words applied by Matthew Arnold to the prose *Mabinogion*, "a *detritus*, as the geologists would say, of something far older"; and their secret is not to be "truly reached until this *detritus*, instead of being called recent because it is found in contact with what is recent, is disengaged, and is made to tell its own story[2]." Nowhere, however, is this *detritus* more difficult to disengage than in the few poems in which Arthur's name appears. The most celebrated of these early Welsh bards know nothing of Arthur. Llywarch Hên and Taliesin never mention him; to them Urien, lord of Rheged, is by far the most imposing figure among all the native warriors who fought against the English. It is Urien with whom "all the bards of the world find favour," and to whom "they ever sing after his desire[3]." Neither is Arthur known to Aneirin, who sang in his *Gododin* the elegy of the Kymric chieftains who met their doom at Cattraeth. "There are only five poems" writes Skene[4], "which mention Arthur at all, and then it is the historical Arthur, the *Gwledig*, to whom the defence of the wall is entrusted, and who fights the twelve battles in the north and finally perishes at Camlan." This is not a quite accurate summary of the facts; for these poems, while pointing to the existence of a historical Arthur, embody also a *detritus* of pure myth.

The most significant, perhaps, of all the references to Arthur in early Welsh poetry is that already quoted from the *Stanzas of the Graves* in *The Black Book of Carmarthen*. The mystery

[1] *The Four Ancient Books of Wales* is the title under which the poems in these MSS were published, with translations and copious dissertations, by W. F. Skene (Edinburgh, 1868).

[2] *On the Study of Celtic Literature.*

[3] *Book of Taliesin*, xi. (Skene, Vol. ii, p 186).

[4] *Four Ancient Books of Wales*, Vol. i, p. 226.

Arthur, however, appears in a distinctly different character in yet another poem included in *The Black Book*. In *Kulhwch and Olwen*, one of Arthur's chief porters answers to the fearsome name of Glewlwyd Gavaelvawr, or Glewlwyd of the Mighty Grasp. *The Black Book* poem is cast in the form of a dialogue between him and Arthur. Glewlwyd would seem, in the poem, to have a castle of his own, from the gates of which he questions Arthur about himself and his followers. The description given of them by Arthur is noteworthy as pointing to the existence of an early tradition which made him the head of a sort of military court, and foreshadows, in a rude way, the fellowship of the Round Table. Several of the names found in it connect this curious poem with *Kulhwch and Olwen*. The first, and the doughtiest, of Arthur's champions is "the worthy Kei (Kai)." "Vain were it to boast against Kei in battle," sings the bard; "when from a horn he drank, he drank as much as four men; when he came into battle, he slew as would an hundred; unless it were God's doing, Kei's death would be unachieved."

Arthur recedes still further into the twilight of myth in the only other old Welsh poem where any extended allusion is made to him. The poem in question is found in *The Book of Taliesin*, and is called *Preiddeu Annwvn*, or the Harrowings of Hell. This is just one of those weird mythological poems which are very difficult to interpret, and where, again to quote Matthew Arnold, the author "is pillaging an antiquity of which he does not fully possess the secret." Here Arthur sets out upon various expeditions over perilous seas in his ship Pridwen; one of them had as its object the rape of a mysterious cauldron belonging to the king of Hades. "Three freights of Pridwen," says the bard, "were they who went out with Arthur; seven alone were they who returned" from Caer Sidi, Caer Rigor and the other wholly unidentified places whither they fared. It is in this poem that the closest parallels of all are found with incidents described in the story of *Kulhwch and Olwen*, and, as a whole, it "evidently deals with expeditions conducted by Arthur by sea to the realms of twilight and darkness[1]." But, here, the British king is much further removed than in *Kulhwch* from any known country, and appears as a purely mythical hero with supernatural attributes.

The most remarkable fragment—for the tale, as we have it, is an obvious *torso*—of all the early Welsh literature about Arthur

[1] Rhys, preface to Dent's *Malory*, p. xxxiv, where the poem's correspondences with *Kulhwch* are pointed out.

distinct groups. In *Kulhwch and Olwen* and *The Dream of Rhonabwy* we have two Arthurian stories of apparently pure British origin, in which Arthur is presented in a *milieu* altogether unaffected by the French romances. The second and better known group, consisting of the three tales entitled *The Lady of the Fountain*, *Geraint, son of Erbin* and *Peredur, son of Evrawc*, are romances palpably based upon French originals. They correspond, respectively, in their main features, to Chrétien de Troyes's *Le chevalier au lion*, *Erec* and *Le conte del Graal*[1].

The *Mabinogion*, as a whole, are the most artistic and delightful expression of the early Celtic genius which we possess. Nowhere else do we come into such close touch with the real *"Celtic magic," with the true enchanted land, where "the eternal illusion clothes itself in the most seductive hues*[2]." *Composed* though they were, in all probability, by a *professional literary* class, these stories are distinguished by a *naive charm which* suggests anything but an artificial literary *craftsmanship*. The supernatural is treated in them as the *most natural thing in the* world, and the personages who possess *magic gifts are made to* move about and speak and behave *as perfectly normal human* creatures. The simple grace of their *narrative, their delicacy and* tenderness of sentiment and, above all, *their feeling for nature*, distinguish these tales *altogether from the elaborate productions* of the French romantic schools; *while in its lucid precision of form*, and in its admirable adaptation *to the matter with which it deals*, no medieval prose surpasses that *of the* Welsh *of the Mabinogion*. These traits are what make it *impossible to regard even the later* Welsh Arthurian stories as mere imitations *of Chrétien's poems*. Their characters and incidents may *be, substantially, the same*; but the tone, the atmosphere, *the entire artistic setting of the* Welsh *tales are altogether different; and "neither Chrétien nor* Marie de France, *nor any other French writer of the time, whether* in *France or England, can for one moment compare with the* Welshmen *as story-tellers pure and simple*[3]."

[1] *Le Conte del Graal* is only in part the work of Chrétien.

[2] Renan, *The Poetry of the Celtic Races*. (Trans. Hutchison.)

[3] A. Nutt, in his edition of *Lady C. Guest's Mabinogion*, p. viii. Cf. Renan: "The charm of the *Mabinogion* principally resides in the amiable serenity of the Celtic mind, neither sad nor gay, ever in suspense between a smile and a tear. We have in them the simple recital of a child, unwitting of any distinction between the noble and the common; there is something of that softly animated world, of that calm and tranquil ideal to which Ariosto's stanzas transport us. The chatter of the later mediaeval French and German imitators can give no idea of this charming manner of narration. The skilful Chrétien de Troyes himself remains in this respect far below the Welsh story-tellers." *The Poetry of the Celtic Races*.

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Edern, the sons of Nud, Geraint, the son of Erbin, Taliesin, the chief of bards, Manawydan, the son of Llŷr. But, among the company, there also appear several grotesque figures of whom nothing is known save what the story-teller himself, giving rein, as it would seem, to a deliberately mischievous humour, briefly records. Thus we have, for example, one Sol, who "could stand all day upon one foot"; Gwevyl, the son of Gwestad, who "on the day he was sad, would let one of his lips drop below his waist, while he turned up the other like a cap upon his head"; Clust, the son of Clustveinad, who "though he were buried seven cubits beneath the earth, would hear the ant fifty miles off rise from her nest in the morning." Even familiar Arthurian heroes, like Kai, are dowered with superhuman powers. "Kai had this peculiarity, that his breath lasted nine nights and days under water, and he could exist nine nights and nine days without sleep." "Very subtle was Kai; when it pleased him he could make himself as tall as the highest tree in the forest." We are remote indeed, in such company as this, from the knights of the Round Table; but we are not so remote from the fairy world depicted in the "Four Branches of the Mabinogi." The conclusion to which *Kulhwch and Olwen*, and the few poems which mention Arthur, clearly point is that the British king was far better known to early Welsh tradition as a mythic hero than as the champion of the Britons in their wars with the English. There may have been a historical Arthur who was a *comes Britanniae*, or a *dux bellorum*, of the sixth century, and his name, "re-echoed by the topography of the country once under his protection," may have "gathered round it legends of heroes and divinities of a past of indefinite extent[1]." What we do, however, know is that the Arthur who emerges out of the mists of Celtic tradition at the beginning of the twelfth century is an entirely imaginary being, a king of fairy-land, undertaking hazardous quests, slaying monsters, visiting the realms of the dead, and having at his call a number of knightly henchmen, notably Kay and Bedivere, who are all but his equals in wizardry and martial prowess. This mythical Arthur—the creation of a primitive imagination altogether unaffected by the sophisticated conceptions of chivalry and of conscious dealers in romantic literary wares—belongs to early Welsh literature alone.

The transformation of the Welsh, or British, Arthur into a romantic hero of European renown was the result of the contact

[1] Rhys, preface to Dent's *Malory*, p. xxxvi.

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immediate patronage that Geoffrey of Monmouth compiled his romantic *History of the Kings of Britain*.

Of Geoffrey's personal history we know little. His full name appears to have been, significantly, Geoffrey Arthur. His relentless critic, William of Newburgh, takes "Arthur" to have been a by-name given to him on the score of his Arthurian fabrications; but the truth probably is that Arthur was the name of his father[1]. His connection with Monmouth is obscure; he may have been born in the town, or educated at the priory founded there by the Breton, Wihenoc. He was never, as he is commonly designated, archdeacon of Monmouth, for there was no such archdeaconry in existence. Whether he was by descent a Breton, or a Welshman, we know no more than we do whether the famous "British book," which he professes to have used, was derived from Wales or from Britanny. Neither matter is of much consequence. The "British book" may very well have been an authentic document, since lost, which was placed, as he tells us, at his disposal by his friend Walter, archdeacon of Oxford. Much Welsh and Breton folk-lore doubtless reached him through monastic channels. Nennius and Bede furnished him with matter which can be clearly traced in his text[2]. There can be little doubt, however, that the main source of the Arthurian portions of his *History* was Geoffrey's own imagination. The floating popular traditions about Arthur, and the few documents which he had to his hand, plainly suggested to him the possibilities of developing a new and striking romantic theme. Geoffrey appears to have gauged the tastes and fancies of the courtly readers of his day with an astuteness worthy of a Defoe. Romance was in demand, and Geoffrey, giving the rein to his faculty for decorative and rhetorical writing, responded to that demand with an address that would have done credit to the most alert of modern novelists. The time-honoured vehicle of the chronicle was turned to new and unexpected uses. Sober and orthodox chroniclers, like William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon, are deliberately warned off the ground thus opened out for the poet and the romancer. The "kings of the Saxons" were their legitimate subject; the "kings of the Britons" were

[1] His name is given as *Gaufridus Arturus* in the list of witnesses to the foundation charter of the abbey of Osney in 1129. See Dugdale, *Monasticon*, vi, p. 251, and Sir F. Madden in *Journal of the Archaeological Institute*, 1858, p. 305.

[2] A full, and most suggestive, discussion of the whole subject of Geoffrey's sources is given in *The Arthurian Material in the Chronicles* by R. H. Fletcher (*Harvard Studies in Phil. and Lit.* Vol. x, 1906).

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obtain the empire of Rome." Thus, Geoffrey brings all his powers of rhetoric, and all his imagination, to bear upon his delineation of Arthur and his exploits. The first six books of the *History* tell, with many embellishments of style and with incidental references to contemporary events elsewhere, inserted as so many grave guarantees of authenticity, the story of Arthur's kingly predecessors. At the close of the sixth book the weird figure of Merlin appears on the scene; and Geoffrey pauses to give, in an entire book, the fantastic prophecies attributed to that wonder-working seer. Romance, frank and undisguised, now usurps the place of sober, or affected, history. Merlin's magic arts are made largely contributory to the birth of "the most renowned Arthur." Uther and Gorlois and Igerna and the castle of Tintagol, or Tintagel, now take their place, for the first time, in the fabric of Arthurian story.

Uther, with Merlin's assistance, gains admission to Igerna's castle in the semblance of her lord, Gorlois, and begets Arthur; upon the death of Gorlois, Uther takes Igerna for his lawful queen, and Arthur of due right succeeds to the throne. Crowned by Dubricius, "archbishop of the City of Legions," at the early age of fifteen, Arthur at once begins his career of conquest. The Saxons, Scots and Picts are encountered and vanquished at the river Duglas; afterwards, with the aid of his cousin, king Hoel of Britanny, Arthur subjugates the entire island and divides Scotland among its original rightful rulers, Lot and his two brothers, Urian and Auguscl. Lot, we are told by the way, "had, in the days of Aurelius Ambrosius, married Arthur's own sister, who had borne unto him Gawain and Mordred." Having restored the whole country to its ancient dignity, Arthur "took unto himself a wife born of a noble Roman family, Guanhumara, who, brought up and nurtured in the household of duke Cador, surpassed in beauty all the other women of the island." Ireland and Iceland are next added to his conquests, while tribute is paid, and homage made to him, by the rulers of the Orkneys and of Gothland. His court now is the centre of a brilliant assemblage of knights, his fear "falls upon the kings of realms oversea" and his "heart became so uplifted within him" that "he set his desire upon subduing the whole of Europe unto himself[1]". Norway, Dacia and Gaul fall in quick succession under Arthur's sway; Normandy is made over to "Bedwyr, his butler," and Anjou to "Kay, his seneschal." Returning to Britain, Arthur next holds high court at

[1] Bk. IX, ch. XI.

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lands, and, in the ensuing battle, Gawain and many others are slain. Mordred, however, is driven back, and Guinevere, in terror for her safety, becomes a nun. The final battle is fought at the river Camel in the west country. Mordred is defeated and slain, and most of the leaders on both sides perish. "Even the renowned king Arthur himself was wounded unto death, and was borne thence unto the island of Avalon for the healing of his wounds."

Such, in brief, is the narrative through the medium of which Arthur made his triumphant entry to the kingship of the most splendid province of medieval romance. Let Geoffrey have the credit which is his due. It is little to the point to seek to minimise his influence upon the rise and growth of Arthurian romance by emphasising his omissions,—that, for example, he knows nothing of Lancelot, of Tristram, of the Holy Grail and of other famous characters and incidents of the fully-developed legend. The salient fact is that while, before the appearance of Geoffrey's *History*, Arthur, as a literary hero, is virtually unknown, he becomes, almost immediately afterwards, the centre of the greatest of the romantic cycles. He is, indeed, transformed eventually into a very different being from the warlike British champion of Geoffrey's book; but it is in that book that we obtain our first full-length literary portrait of him, and, in the Mordred and Guinevere episode, that we find the first deliberate suggestion of the love-tragedy which the romancers were quick to seize upon and to expand. Geoffrey's Arthur is, no doubt, largely a Normanised Arthur, and many of the details and incidents woven into his narrative are derived from his knowledge and observation of Norman manners and Norman pomp[1]; but his story, as a whole, has, like every vivid product of the imagination, a charm altogether independent of the time and the conditions of its making, and is charged throughout with the seductive magic of romance. Hence the spell which Geoffrey's legends exerted over many famous English poets, haunted by memories of

what resounds
In fable or romance of Uther's son,
Begirt with British and Armoric knights.

Possibly, no work before the age of printed books attained such immediate and astonishing popularity. To this the number of extant MSS of the work bears testimony[2], while translations,

[1] See Fletcher, *The Arthurian Material in the Chronicles* (Harvard, 1906), pp. 100 sqq.

[2] The British Museum alone has thirty-five, and the Bodleian sixteen.

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in Wales. An important Welsh translation of it[1], which was, at one time, supposed to have been its "British" original, was, indeed, made at an early date, but the medieval Welsh bards remained altogether indifferent to Arthurian story. The second great period of Welsh bardic activity extends from the twelfth century down to the death of prince Llywelyn ap Gruffud in 1282; but we look in vain among the works of the crowd of bards who flourished at this period for any celebration of Arthur and his deeds. There is no Welsh metrical romance, or epic, of Arthur. The medieval bards sing, in preference, of living warriors or of those lately dead, well knowing that such encomiastic poetry brought its ready rewards. It is to her prose story-tellers that Wales owes her one incomparable contribution to Arthurian romance in the native tongue.

The full value of the Arthurian stories as poetic and romantic matter and, in particular, their possibilities of adaptation and expansion as ideal tales of chivalry, were first perceived in France, or, at any rate, by writers who used the French language. Three stages, or forms, in the literary exploitation to which the legends were subjected by French romantic writers, can be clearly traced. First comes the metrical chronicle, in which Geoffrey's quasi-historical narrative appears in an expanded and highly-coloured romantic setting, and of which Wace's *Brut* is the earliest standard example. This was the literary form in which the Arthurian legend made its first appearance in English. Next in order, and not much later, perhaps, in their actual origin, come the metrical romances proper. These poetical romances, of which the works of Chrétien de Troyes are at once the typical, and the most successful, examples, are concerned with the careers and achievements of individual knights of the Arthurian court. In them, Arthur himself plays quite a subordinate part; his wars and the complications that led to his tragic end are altogether lost sight of. The third stage is represented by the prose romances, which began to be compiled, probably, during the closing years of the twelfth century, and which underwent a continuous process of expansion, interpolation and redaction until about the middle of the thirteenth century. Many of these prose romances, such as those of *Merlin*

[1] *Ystorya Brenhined y Brytanyeit* in *The Red Book of Hergest* (edd. Rhys and Gwenogvryn Evans, Oxford, 1890). Another Welsh chronicle, also at one time supposed to have been Geoffrey's original, is Tysilio's *Brut*, printed in the *Myvyrian Archaeology of Wales* as "from the Red Book of Hergest." No such chronicle, however, appears in *The Red Book*. Tysilio is supposed to have lived in the seventh century; the chronicle ascribed to him is not found in any MS earlier than the fifteenth.

Above all, Wace's *Brut* is of signal interest to English readers as forming the basis of the solitary contribution of any consequence made by an English writer to the vast and varied mass of Arthurian literature before the fourteenth century[1]. Layamon, however, is a very different poet from Wace. While not indifferent to romance, as several significant additions to the Arthurian part of his story will show, Layamon wrote his *Brut* as a frankly patriotic English epic. Wace's work is almost as artificial and exotic a product as the poetical romances; it was designed as a contribution to the polite literature of the Norman aristocracy. Layamon, dwelling in seclusion on the banks of the Severn, where "it was good to be," was fired by an ambition "to tell the noble deeds of England," and to tell them in the English tongue. His poem is the first articulate utterance of the native English genius reasserting itself in its own language after the long silence which succeeded the Conquest. Although he borrows most of his matter from Wace, Layamon, in manner and spirit, is much nearer akin to the robust singers of the Old English period than to the courtly French poet. The simple force and vividness of the primitive English epic reappear in descriptions of battle scenes and of heroic deeds. Even the poet's diction is scrupulously pure English. And Arthur, who, in the hands of the professional romancers, had already become all but an alien to his fatherland, is restored to his rightful place as the champion of Britain, and the great Christian king who

> Drew all the petty princedoms under him,
> Their king and head, and made a realm, and reign'd.

Arthur, therefore, was to Layamon, primarily, the ideal British hero—an actual king of England, whose character and prowess deserved the veneration of his countrymen altogether apart from the glamour with which romance had enshrouded his name. But Layamon was a poet; and upon him, as upon the rest, the romantic glamour works its inevitable spell. Elf-land claims Arthur, both at his birth and at his death. Elves received him into the world; they gave him gifts, to become the best of knights and a mighty king, to have long life and to be generous above all living men[2]. At his passing, Arthur says he will go to Argante (Morgan *le fay*), the splendid elf; she will heal him of his wounds, so that he will return again to his kingdom[3]. Again, Arthur's byrnie was made for him by Wygar, the elvish smith[4], his spear by Griffin of the

[1] Cf. *ante*, Chapter XI, pp. 234 ff.
[2] Ll. 23,610 sqq.
[3] Ll. 19,254 sqq. (Madden's ed.).
[4] L. 21,133.

city of the wizard Merlin (Kaermerdin)[1]. Caliburn, his sword, was wrought in Avalon with magic craft[2]; the Round Table, by a strange carpenter from beyond the sea[3]. Nowhere, however, does Layamon's poem breathe more of the spirit of pure romance than in the passages which describe Arthur's last battle and fall. The encounter took place at Camelford (Camlan) "a name that will last for ever[4]." The stream, hard by, "was flooded with blood unmeasured." So thick was the throng that the warriors could not distinguish each other[5], but "each slew downright, were he swain, were he knight." Modred and all his knights perished and "there were slain all the brave ones, Arthur's warriors, high and low, and all the Britons of Arthur's board." Of all the two hundred thousand men who fought, none remained, at the end of the fight, save Arthur and two of his knights. But Arthur was sorely wounded, and, bidding the young Constantine, Cador's son, take charge of his kingdom, he consigns himself to the care of Argante, "the fairest of all maidens," who dwells in Avalon. Thence, cured of his wounds, he will come again to "dwell with the Britons with mickle joy."

Even with the words there came from the sea a short boat, borne on the waves, and two women therein, wondrously arrayed; and they took Arthur anon, and bare him quickly, and softly laid him down, and fared forth away. Then was brought to pass that which Merlin whilom said, that there should be sorrow untold at Arthur's forth-faring. The Britons believe yet that he is alive, and dwelleth in Avalon, with the fairest of all elves, and ever yet the Britons look for Arthur's coming. Was never the man born, nor ever of woman chosen, that knoweth the sooth, to say more of Arthur. But whilom there was a seer hight Merlin; he said with words—and his sayings were sooth—that an Arthur should yet come to help the Britons.

In this passage, as in many others, Layamon supplies several details not found in Wace, and his poem throughout bears abundant evidence that he drew upon a fund of independent traditions gleaned from many fields. Among the most interesting of Layamon's additions to, and amplifications of, Wace's narrative are his accounts of Arthur's dream shortly before his last return to Britain, and of the origin and the making of the Round Table. The dream[6], of which neither Geoffrey nor Wace know anything, foreshadows the treachery of Modred and Guinevere, and disturbs

[1] L. 23,783. [2] L. 21,135. [3] L. 22,910. [4] Ll. 28,533 sqq.

[5] *Cf.* Tennyson, *Passing of Arthur*:

"For friend and foe were shadows in the mist,
And friend slew friend not knowing whom he slew."

[6] See Ll. 28,020 sqq.

Arthur with the sense of impending doom. The occasion of the institution of the Round Table is, as in Wace, a quarrel for precedence among Arthur's knights; but the description of the *actual making, and of the properties, of the Table is all Layamon's own.* It was while he was in Cornwall, after the quarrel among his knights, that Arthur met the man from oversea who offered to "make him a board, wondrous fair, at which sixteen hundred men and more might sit[1]." Its huge size notwithstanding, and though it took four weeks to make, the board could, by some magic means, be carried by Arthur as he rode, and set by him in what place soever he willed. Like Wace, Layamon evidently knew stories about the Round Table, of which the origin has never been traced; for "this was that same table" he says, "of which the Britons boast"—the Britons, who tell "many leasings" of king Arthur, and say of him things "that never happened in the kingdom of this world[2]." So it would appear that Layamon, had he pleased, could have told us much more of Arthur. Even as it stands, however, his poem is a notable contribution to Arthurian story, and has the unique distinction of being the first celebration of "the matter of Britain" in the English tongue.

When we pass from the metrical chronicles to the pure romances, both verse and prose, we all but part with the traditional British Arthur altogether. Not only are we suddenly transported into the "no man's land" of chivalry, but we find ourselves surrounded by strange apparitions from regions Geoffrey and his translators never knew. In the romances, the Arthurian court serves but as a convenient rendezvous for a

moving row
Of magic shadow-shapes that come and go

in quest of adventures which bear little, or no, relation to the British king. Characters, of whom the chroniclers tell us nothing, and who were themselves the heroes of quite independent legends, now make a dramatic entry upon the Arthurian stage. Tristram and Lancelot and Perceval play parts which divert our attention quite away from that assigned to Arthur himself. Thus, a complete history of Arthurian romance involves a series of enquiries into the growth of a number of legends which have, for the most part, only the most artificial connection with the original Arthurian tradition. Some of these legends are as archaic, and as purely mythical, as the primitive fables about the British Arthur, and

[1] See ll. 22,910 sqq. [2] L. 22,987.

were probably current in popular lays long before the latter half of the twelfth century. A full account of the romances in which they were embodied and enriched during the age of chivalry belongs to the history of French, and German, rather than to that of English, literature. Not until the fourteenth century do we come across a single English writer whose name is to be mentioned in the same breath with those of Chrétien de Troyes and the authors of the French prose romances, or of Wolfram von Eschenbach, Gottfried von Strassburg and Hartmann von Aue. Here, only the briefest review can be attempted of the main features of the subsidiary legends which were imported, by these and other writers, into the vast Arthurian miscellany.

Of all such legends, the most intimately connected with Arthur himself is the story of Merlin. In Welsh tradition, Merlin, or Myrdin, is a figure very similar to Taliesin—a wizard bard of the sixth century, to whom a number of spurious poetical compositions came, in course of time, to be ascribed. His first association with Arthur is due to Geoffrey of Monmouth, who identifies him with the Ambrosius of Nennius and makes of him both a magician and a prophet; to his magic arts, as we have seen, the birth of Arthur was largely due. His character is further developed in a Latin hexameter poem, *Vita Merlini*, composed, probably, about the year 1148 and attributed by several competent authorities to Geoffrey. This poem, however, presents us with a conception of the mage which is not easy to reconcile with the account given of him in Geoffrey's *History*, and suggests many points of analogy with certain early Welsh poems in which Merlin figures, and with which Geoffrey could hardly have been acquainted[1]. Merlin makes his first appearance in French romantic poetry in a poem of which only a fragment has been preserved, supposed to be by Robert de Borron, and dating from the end of the twelfth century. Upon this poem was based the French prose romance of *Merlin*, part of which is assigned to Robert de Borron, and which exists in two forms—the first known as the "ordinary" *Merlin*, and the other as the *Suite de Merlin*. For Robert de Borron, the enchanter's arts are but so many manifestations of the powers of darkness; Merlin himself becomes the devil's offspring and most active agent. From the *Suite de Merlin*, of which Malory's first four books are an abridged version, was derived one of the minor offshoots of

[1] These resemblances are pointed out in what is the fullest account of the Merlin saga in English, *Outlines of the History of the Legend of Merlin*, by W. E. Mead (Part IV of H. B. Wheatley's edition of the prose *Merlin* in the E.E.T.S. series).

Arthurian romance, the striking story of Balin and Balan. The earliest romance of Merlin in English is the metrical *Arthour and Merlin*, translated from a French original at the beginning of the fourteenth century. This work, however, is not so well known as the great prose *Merlin*, a translation from the French made about the middle of the fifteenth century.

No knight of the primitive Arthurian fellowship enjoyed a higher renown than Arthur's nephew, Gawain. Under the name of Gwalchmei, Gawain figures prominently in the Welsh Triads and in the *Mabinogion*; while, as Walgainus, he is one of Arthur's most faithful and doughty lieutenants in the wars recounted by Geoffrey. So great was the traditional fame of Gawain that William of Malmesbury thought it worth while to record the discovery of his grave in Pembrokeshire; and there is some evidence that his name was well known even in Italy by the beginning of the twelfth century[1]. He was, probably, the centre of a cycle of adventures quite independent of, and quite as old as, the original Arthur saga. He is certainly the hero of more episodic romances than any other British knight[2], and, in the general body of Arthurian romance, none is so ubiquitous. In Chrétien de Troyes's *Conte del Graal*, and in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, Gawain is almost as important a personage as Perceval himself. In the German poem *Diu Krône*, by Heinrich von dem Türlin, he, and not Perceval, is the actual achiever of the Grail quest. It is curious, however, to note that no other knight undergoes so marked a transformation of character as he in his progress through the romances. In the *Mabinogion*, and the earlier stages of the legend generally, Gawain appears as the paragon of knightly courtesy. In some of the later romances, particularly in the more elaborate versions of the Grail legend, as in Malory and Tennyson,

A reckless and irreverent knight is he[3].

Before Malory's time, however, Gawain is uniformly presented in English literature in a flattering light, and no Arthurian hero was more popular with English writers[4]. The finest of all Middle English metrical romances, *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight*,

[1] Zimmer, *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, 1890, No. 20, p. 831.
[2] Gaston Paris gives summaries of a number of these in *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, vol. xxx.
[3] Tennyson, *The Holy Grail*, 852.
[4] See the *Sir Gawayne* romances, ed. Madden, Bannatyne Club (London, 1839).

dealing with incidents derived, apparently, from a primitive form of the Gawain legend, portrays him in his original character as a model of chivalry and of all the knightly graces.

In the full-orbed Arthurian cycle the most dramatic feature of the story which centres around the fortunes of Arthur himself is the love of Lancelot for Guinevere. The story of Lancelot is a comparatively late, and, to all appearance, a non-Celtic, graft upon the original Arthurian stock. Whether, as some surmise, its motive was originally suggested by the Tristram legend or not, it remains as an obvious embodiment of the French ideal of *amour courtois*, and is thus the most significant example of the direct influence of the conceptions of chivalry upon the development of Arthurian story. Lancelot first appears as the lover of Guinevere in Chrétien's *Chevalier de la Charrette*, a poem written at the instance of Marie of Champagne, who took a lively interest in the elaboration of the theory and practice of "courtly love." Hence it came about that, as Chaucer tells us, women held "in ful gret reverence the boke of Lancelot de Lake[1]." The book to which Chaucer, like Dante in the famous passage about Paolo and Francesca, refers is, doubtless, the great prose romance of *Lancelot*, traditionally associated with the name of Walter Map. The *Lancelot* is a vast compilation, of which there are three clear divisions—the first usually called the *Lancelot* proper, the second the *Quest of the Holy Grail* and the third the *Morte Arthur*[2]. In the MSS, these romances are persistently attributed to Walter Map; one version of the *Quest* is described as having been written by him "for the love of his lord, king Henry, who caused it to be translated from Latin into French." A passage in Huc de Rotelande's poem, *Ipomedon*, following the description of a tournament which bears some resemblance to incidents recorded in *Lancelot*, has been taken to furnish additional evidence of Map's authorship[3]. The main difficulty about assigning these romances to Map is that of reconciling the composition of works of such size with his known activity as a courtier and a public man. Nor, apart from one or two fairy-stories included in it, does what may be called his common-place book, *De Nugis Curialium*, afford any indication of the life-long interest which

[1] *Nonne Prestes Tale*, 392.

[2] See Ward, *Catalogue of Romances in the British Museum* (Vol. I, pp. 345 sqq.), for an account of some of the MSS.

[3] See *ante*, Chapter X, p. 190. For a full discussion of the problems suggested by this passage, see Ward, *Catalogue of Romances in B. M.* (Vol. I, p. 731) and Miss J. L. Weston's *The Three Days' Tournament* (Nutt, 1902).

Arthurian romance must have had for one capable of so imposing a contribution to its literature as the great prose *Lancelot*.

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[1] A. Nutt, *The Legends of the Holy Grail* (Popular Studies in Mythology, Romance and Folklore, 1902), p. 73.

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dwell, chiefly, upon the nature and origin of these talismans. The search for the talismans is, in the "Quest" stories, connected with the healing of an injured kinsman, and with the avenging of the wrong done to him. In the fifteenth century English metrical romance of *Sir Percyvelle*, the vengeance of a son upon his father's slayers is the sole argument of the story.

The Grail cycle, in its fully developed form, would thus seem to comprise stories of mythical and pagan origin, together with later accretions due entirely to the invention of romancers with a deliberately ecclesiastical bias. The palpably mythical character of the earlier "Quest" versions points to their being of more archaic origin than the "Early History" documents, and they are almost certainly to be traced to Celtic sources. "The texture, the colouring, the essential conception of the older Grail Quest stories can be paralleled from early Celtic mythic romance, and from no other contemporary European literature[1]." These tales, however, proved susceptible of being used, in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, for religious purposes; thus, the Grail came to be identified with the cup of the Last Supper, which Pilate gave to Joseph of Arimathea, and in which Joseph treasured the blood that flowed from Christ's wounds on the Cross. The cup was brought by Joseph to Britain, and its story is thus connected with an old legend which attributed to Joseph the conversion of Britain to Christianity. The traditions concerning this evangelisation of Britain appear to have been specially preserved in documents kept at the abbey of Glastonbury; and Glastonbury, associated as it was even with Avalon itself, came, as we know, to have a significant connection with Arthurian lore by the end of the twelfth century. The glorification of Britain manifestly intended by this particular use of the Grail legend suggests, once again, the interest taken by the Angevin court in the diplomatic possibilities of adroit literary manipulation of the Arthurian traditions. And if, indeed, Henry II can be proved to have had anything to do with it at all, an argument of some plausibility is established in support of the MS record that the courtier, Walter Map, did, "for the love of his lord, king Henry," translate from Latin into French *The Quest of the Holy Grail.*

There remains one other famous legend to be noticed, which has attached itself to the Arthurian group, and which, in its origin and character, is the most distinctively Celtic of them all. The story of Tristram and Iseult is the most purely poetical, and,

[1] Nutt, *Legends of the Holy Grail*, p. 59.

probably, the oldest, of the subsidiary Arthurian tales. Above all, its scene, its character and its *motif* mark it out as the one undoubted and unchallenged property of "the Celtic fringe." Ireland and Wales, Cornwall and Britanny, all claim a share in it. Tristram appears, under the name of Drystan son of Tallwch, as a purely mythical hero in a very old Welsh triad, which represents him as the nephew, and swineherd, of Mark—March ab Meirchion—protecting his master's swine against Arthur's attempt to get at them[1]. Mark, in the earliest poetical versions of the tale, is king of Cornwall. Iseult, the primal heroine, is a daughter of Ireland, while the other Iseult, she of the White Hands, is a princess of Britanny. The entire story breathes the very atmosphere, and *reflects the dim, mysterious half-lights, of the western islands* beaten by the gray, inhospitable sea—the sea, which, in the finest rendering of the legend in English poetry, keeps up a haunting choral accompaniment to Iseult's anguish-stricken cries at Tintagel, when

> all their past came wailing in the wind,
> And all their future thundered in the sea[2].

Coloured by scarcely any trace of Christian sentiment, and only faintly touched, as compared with the story of Lancelot, by the artificial conventions of chivalry, the legend of Tristram bears every mark of a remote pagan, and Celtic, origin. Neither in classical, nor in Teutonic, saga, is there anything really comparable with the elemental and over-mastering passion which makes the story of Tristram and Iseult, in tragic interest and pathos, second to none of the great love-tales of the world.

The Tristram legend was preserved, in all probability, in many detached lays before it came to be embodied in any extant poem. The earliest known poetical versions of the story are those of the Anglo-Normans, Béroul (c. 1150) and Thomas (c. 1170), of which we possess only fragments, and which were the foundations, respectively, of the German poems of Eilhart von Oberge and of Gottfried von Strassburg. A lost *Tristan* poem is also ascribed to Chrétien de Troyes, and is supposed by some to have been used by the writer, or writers[3], of the long prose *Tristan*, upon which Malory largely drew. As it passed through the hands of these

[1] See Rhys, *The Arthurian Legend*, p. 13, where it is said of March, or Mark, that he was "according to legends, both Brythonic and Irish, an unmistakable prince of darkness."

[2] Swinburne, *Tristram of Lyonesse*.

[3] The names, almost certainly fictitious, of Luces de Gast and of Hélie de Borron are associated with the authorship of the prose *Tristan*.

writers, the Tristram story, like the rest, was subjected to the inevitable process of chivalric decoration; but it has managed to preserve better than the others its bold primitive characteristics. Its original existence in the form of scattered popular lays is, to some extent, attested by one of the poems of Marie of France—*Le Chèvrefeuille* (The Honeysuckle)—recording a pretty stratagem of Tristan during his exile from king Mark's court, whereby he succeeded in obtaining a stolen interview with Iseult. Nor was it the Tristram legend alone that was thus preserved in popular lays from a period anterior to that of the great romantic efflorescence of Arthurian story. Many isolated poems dealing with characters and incidents subsequently drawn into the Arthurian medley must have been based upon traditions popularised by the rude art of some obscure minstrels, or story-tellers, "Breton" or other. One of the best known examples of such poems is Marie of France's lay of *Lanval*, a Celtic fairy-tale quite unconnected, originally, with the Arthurian court. Even more ambitious works, such as the *Chevalier au Lion*, or *Yvain*, and the *Erec*, of Chrétien, were almost certainly founded upon poems, or popular tales, of which the primitive versions have been irretrievably lost. For the Welsh prose romances of *The Lady of the Fountain* and of *Geraint*—the heroes of which, Owein and Geraint, correspond respectively to Chrétien's Yvain and Erec—while resembling the French poems in their main incidents, cannot be satisfactorily accounted for except on the supposition that the stories embodied in them originally existed in a much older and simpler form than that in which they are presented by Chrétien.

In this necessarily cursory review of an extensive and complicated subject, a good deal has been claimed for Celtic sources and Celtic influence; and it may not be out of place to conclude with an attempt to summarise, very briefly, the actual debt of English literature to the early literature of the Celtic peoples. Upon few subjects has there been, in our time, so much vague and random writing as upon so-called Celtic "traits" and "notes" in English imaginative literature. Renan and Matthew Arnold, in two famous essays, which, in their time, rendered a real service to letters by calling attention to the buried literary treasures of Wales and Ireland, set a fashion of speculating and theorising about "the Celt" as perilous as it is fascinating. For, after all, no critical method is more capable of abuse than the process of aesthetic literary analysis which seeks to distinguish the Celtic from the

other ingredients in the genius of the greater English writers, and which sounds Shakespeare, or Byron, or Keats for the Celtic "note." While there is no difficulty about admitting that the authentic literature of the Celts reveals a "sentiment," a "natural magic," a "turn for style," and even a "Pindarism" and a "Titanism,"[1] which are all its own, it is a very different matter to assign a Celtic source to the supposed *equivalents* of these things in later English poetry. An example of the peculiar dangers besetting such speculations is furnished by Matthew Arnold's own observations about Macpherson and the Celtic "melancholy." The Ossianic poems, whatever their original Gaelic sources may have been, reflect far more of the dour melancholy peculiar to the middle eighteenth century than of anything really characteristic of the primitive Celtic temperament. Matthew Arnold is, indeed, able to parallel the laments over the desolation of the halls of Balclutha, and so on, with extracts from the old Welsh poet, Llywarch Hên. But even Llywarch's anguish as he contemplates the vanished glories of the hall of Kyndylan is by no means peculiar to the Celt. The same melancholy vein is found in the early poetry of other races; it appears in the Old English poems of *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*, and even in the ancient poetry of the east, for

> They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
> The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep,
> And Bahrám, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass
> Stamps o'er his Head but cannot break his Sleep.

The direct influence of Celtic literature upon that of England amounts, on any strict computation, to very little. And this is only natural when we remember that the two languages, in which the chief monuments of that literature are preserved—Welsh and Irish—present difficulties which only a very few intrepid English linguists have had the courage and the patience to surmount. Thus it happens, for example, that the greatest of all the medieval Welsh poets—Davyđ ap Gwilym, a contemporary of Chaucer—is only known to English readers by fragmentary notices, and indifferent translations, supplied by George Borrow. A few tantalising, and freely translated, scraps—for they are nothing more—from the Welsh bards are due to Gray; while Thomas Love Peacock has treated, in his own peculiar vein of sardonic humour, themes borrowed from ancient Welsh poetry and tradition. Above all, there remains the singularly graceful translation of the Welsh

[1] These are some of Matthew Arnold's "notes" of the Celtic genius in *The Study of Celtic Literature*.

Mabinogion by Lady Charlotte Guest. The literature of Ireland has, at a quite recent date, been much better served by translators than that of Wales, and several admirable English versions of Irish poems and prose tales are making their influence felt upon the literature of the day. So far, however, as the older Celtic literature is concerned, it is not so much its form that has told to any appreciable extent upon English writers as its themes and its spirit. The main channel of this undoubted Celtic influence was that afforded by the Arthurian and its kindred legends. The popularity of the "matter of Britain" came about at a time when there was, comparatively, much more intimate literary commerce between the European nations than there is now. The Normans succeeded in bringing Britain and France at least into much closer contact than has ever existed between them since; and it was France that controlled the literary destinies of Europe during the great romantic period of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It would be rash to endeavour to apportion between the south of France and the northern "Celtic fringe" their respective contributions to all that is denoted by the ideals of chivalry. But, in the mist which still overhangs the subject, we do seem to discern with fair distinctness that it was the conjunction of these apparently diverse racial tendencies, directed by the diplomatic genius of the Normans, that gave us our vast and picturesque body of Arthurian romance. Through all the various strains of Arthurian story we hear

> the horns of Elfland faintly blowing;

and it is quite possible that, to the Celtic wonderland, with its fables of "the little people," we owe much of the fairy-lore which has, through Shakespeare and other poets of lower degree, enriched the literature of England. Chaucer, at any rate, seemed to have very little doubt about it, for he links all that he knew, or cared to know, about the Arthurian stories with his recollections of the fairy world:

> In th' olde dayes of the king Arthour,
> Of which that Britons speken greet honour,
> Al was this land fulfild of fayerye;
> The elf-queen, with hir joly companye
> Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede.

So let us believe, with the poets, and leave the British Arthur in his unquestioned place as the supreme king of fairy-land.

CHAPTER XIII

METRICAL ROMANCES, 1200—1500

I

Men speke of romances of prys,
Of Horn child and of Ypotys,
Of Bevis and sir Gy,
Of sir Libeux and Pleyn-damour;
But sir Thopas, he bereth the flour
Of royal chivalry. SIR THOPAS.

It is hard to understand the process of change that made so much difference between Old and Middle English story-telling. At first, one is inclined to account for it by the Norman conquest, and, no doubt, that is one of the factors; the degradation of the English and their language naturally led to a more popular and vulgar sort of narrative literature. *Beowulf* was composed for persons of quality, *Havelok* for the common people. Old English narrative poetry was, in its day, the best obtainable; English metrical romances were known by the authors, vendors and consumers of them to be inferior to the best, *i.e.* to the French; and, consequently, there is a rustic, uncourtly air about them. Their demeanour is often lumbering, and they are sometimes conscious of it. The English look to the French for instruction in good manners and in the kinds of literature that belong properly to a court. In the old times before the Conquest they had the older courtliness which was their own, and which is represented in the Old English epic remains, *Beowulf, Waldhere* and other poems.

But it will not do to regard the Conquest as a full and complete explanation of the difference, because the same kind of change is found in other Teutonic countries where there was no political conquest. In Denmark and Sweden and Germany and the Netherlands there are to be found riming romances of the same sort as the English, written about the same time. In Germany, it is true, the romantic school of the early thirteenth century is much more refined than anything in England before the days of Chaucer and Gower; but, besides the narrative work of the great German poets

of that time there are many riming tales that may very well be compared with English popular romances; while in Denmark and Sweden there is a still closer likeness to England. There the riming narrative work is not a bit more regular or courtly than in England; there is the same kind of easy, shambling verse, the same sort of bad spelling, the same want of a literary standard. But in those countries there was no Norman conquest; so that it will not do to make the political condition of the English accountable for the manners of their popular literature. The Norman conquest helped, no doubt, in the depression of English literature, but like things happened in other countries without a foreign conqueror. Just as all the Teutonic languages (except that of Iceland) pass from the Old to the Middle stage, so in literature there is a parallel movement in Germany, England and Denmark from an earlier to a later medieval type. In all the Teutonic countries, though not at the same time in all, there was a change of taste and fashion which abandoned old epic themes and native forms of verse for new subjects and for riming measures. This meant a great disturbance and confusion of literary principles and traditions; hence, much of the new literature was experimental and undisciplined. It took long for the nations to find a literary standard. The Germans attained it about 1200; the English in the time of Chaucer; the Danes and Swedes not until long after the close of the Middle Ages. The progress from Old to Middle English narrative verse is not to be understood from a consideration of England alone; it is part of a general change in European fashions, a new mixture of Teutonic and Roman elements, not to speak of Celtic and oriental strains in the blending.

In the history of English narrative poetry there is a great gap of two centuries between *The Battle of Maldon* and Layamon's *Brut*, with very little to fill it or even to show what sort of things have been lost, what varieties of story-telling amused the English in the reign of Harold Godwinsson or of Henry I. In France, on the other hand, these centuries are rich in story books still extant; and, as the English metrical romances depend very largely upon the French, the history of them may to some extent be explained from French history; though often more by way of contrast than of resemblance.

In France, the twelfth century witnessed a very remarkable change of taste in stories which spread over all Europe and affected the English, the Germans and other peoples in different

ways. The old national epics, the *chansons de geste*, were displaced by a new romantic school, which triumphed over the old like a young Olympian dynasty over Saturn and his peers, or like the new comedy of the restoration over the last Elizabethans. The *chansons de geste* were meant for the hall, for Homeric recitation after supper; the new romances were intended to be read in my lady's bower; they were for summer leisure and daylight, as in the pretty scene described by Chrétien de Troyes in his *Chevalier au Lion*, and translated into English:

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The mayden red, at thai myght here,
A real romance in that place,
But I ne wote of wham it was;
She was but fiftene yeres alde.
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She was both gracious gode and fayre[1].

These French romances were dedicated to noble ladies, and represented everything that was most refined and elegant in the life of the twelfth century. Furthermore, like other later romantic schools, like Scott and Victor Hugo, authors travelled wide for their subjects. The old French poet's well-known division of stories according to the three "matters"—the "matter of France," the "matter of Britain" and the "matter of Rome the great"[2]—very imperfectly sums up the riches and the variety of French romantic themes, even when it is understood that the "matter of Rome" includes the whole of antiquity, the tales of Thebes and Troy, the wars of Alexander. It is true that (as in later romantic schools) the variety of scene and costume does not always prevent monotony. The romantic hero may be a knight of king Arthur's court, or may take his name from Protesilaus or Palaemon or Archytas; the scene in one story may be Logres or Lyonesse, in another Greece or Calabria; it does not really make much difference. So Mrs Radcliffe's heroes, or Victor Hugo's, are of the same sort, whether their scene be in the Pyrenees or in Italy. But,

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nevertheless, the freedom of wandering over the world in search of plots and characters was exhilarating and inspiriting in the twelfth century in France; there was great industry in fiction, a stirring literary competition. The following ages very largely lived on the products of it, to satisfy their own wants in the way of romance.

The leaders of this school, Benoit de Ste More and Chrétien de Troyes, with their followers, were courtly persons, authors of fashionable novels, bent on putting into their work the spirit and all the graces of gentle conversation as it was then understood, more particularly the refinements of amatory sentiment, such as was allegorised in the next century in *The Romaunt of the Rose*. This sort of thing could not be equally appreciated or appropriated in all countries. Some people understood it, others could not. The great houses of Germany were very quick to learn from French masters and to rival them in their own line. Hartmann von Aue translated Chrétien freely—the romance of Enid, the tale of Yvain. Wolfram von Eschenbach in his *Parzival* may borrow the substance, but the rendering, the spirit, is his own, removed far from any danger of comparison with the French school, because it has a different kind of nobility. In England things were otherwise, and it was not till the age of Chaucer and Gower that there was any English narrative work of the finer sort, with the right courtly good manners and a proper interest in sentimental themes. The English of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were generally unable to make much of the "finer shades" in their French authors. They can dispose of romantic plots and adventures, they are never tired of stories; but they have difficulty in following the eloquent monologues of passionate damsels; the elegant French phrasing annoyed them just as one of the later French successors of Chrétien, the heroic romance of *Le Grand Cyrus*, affected Major Bellenden. Even the more ambitious of the English romances generally fall far short of the French and cannot keep up with their elaborate play of rhetoric and emotion. There is only one English version of a romance by Chrétien, *Ywain and Gawain*. This is comparatively late; it belongs to the time of Chaucer; it is not rude; on the contrary, it is one of the most accomplished of all the riming tales outside the work of Chaucer and Gower. But it cuts short the long speeches of the original. Chrétien's *Yvain* (*Le Chevalier au Lion*) has 6818 lines; the English version, 4032. Hartmann, on the other hand, spins his story out to 8166 lines, being thoroughly possessed with admiration of the French ways of thinking. The English romances of

Ipomedon (there are two in rime, besides a prose version) show well the difficulties and discrepancies, as will be explained later.

William of Palerne is an example of a different sort, showing how hard it was for the English, even as late as the middle of the fourteenth century, to understand and translate the work of the French romantic school. The English poet takes up the French *Guillaume de Palerme*, a sophisticated, sentimental story written in the fluent, unemphatic, clear style which perhaps only Gower could rightly reproduce in English. This is turned into alliterative verse, with rather strange results, the rhetoric of the English school being utterly different from the French: quaint in diction, inclined to be violent and extravagant, very effective in satirical passages (as *Piers Plowman* was to show) or in battle scenes (as in the *Morte Arthure*), but not well adapted for polite and conventional literature. The alliterative poets were justified when they took their own way and did not try to compete with the French. Their greatest work in romance is *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight*, written by a man who understood his business and produced new effects, original, imaginative, without trying to copy the manner of the French artists.

At the same time, while the great, the overruling, French influence is to be found in the ambitious literary work of Chrétien de Troyes and his peers, it must not be forgotten that there was also a simpler but still graceful kind of French romance, with which the English translators had more success. This is best represented in the work of Marie de France; and, in English, by the shorter romances which profess to be taken from Breton lays, such as *Launfal*, *Orfeo* and the *Lai le Freine*. Here, the scale is smaller, and there is no superabundance of monologue and sentimental digression. The clear lines of the original could be followed by the English without too much difficulty; for the English, though long inferior to the French in subtlety, were not bunglers, except when they ventured on unfamiliar ground without the proper education.

Briefly and roughly, the history of the English romances might be put in this way. About the year 1200 French literature came to dominate the whole of Christendom, especially in the matter of stories; not only sending abroad the French tales of Charlemagne and Roland, but importing plots, scenery and so forth, from many lands, Wales and Britanny, Greece and the further east, and giving new French forms to them, which were admired and, as far as possible, borrowed by foreign nations, according to their several

tastes and abilities. The English took a large share in this trade. Generally speaking, their taste was easily satisfied. What they wanted was adventures; slaughter of Saracens, fights with dragons and giants, rightful heirs getting their own again, innocent princesses championed against their felon adversaries. Such commodities were purveyed by popular authors, who adapted from the French what suited them and left out the things in which the French authors were most interested, viz. the ornamental passages. The English romance writers worked for common minstrels and their audiences, and were not particular about their style. They used, as a rule, either short couplets or some variety of that simple stanza which is better known to most readers from *Sir Thopas* than from *Horn Childe* or *Sir Libeaus.* *Sir Thopas* illustrates and summarises, in parody, all the ways of the popular romance for a long time before Chaucer and for long after his death. Of course there are many differences in particular cases, and *Sir Thopas,* with all his virtue, does not so far outshine the others as to make them indistinguishable. *Beves* is not exactly the same kind of thing as *Sir Guy,* and the story of *Sir Libeaus* has merits of its own not to be confounded with those of the other heroes. Nevertheless, they are all of one kind, and their style is popular and hackneyed. The authors were well enough pleased to have it so; they did not attempt to rival their eminent French masters.

But there were exceptions. One finds ambition at work in English poets even in days when French literature might have appeared so strong and so exalted as to dishearten any mere English competitor. The English *Sir Tristrem* is a specimen of literary vanity; the English author is determined to improve upon his original, and turns the simple verse of his French book into rather elaborate lyrical stanzas. And, again, it was sometimes possible for an Englishman to write gracefully enough without conceit or emphasis; as in *Ywain and Gawain,* already quoted. And the alliterative romances are in a class by themselves.

Chaucer and Gower disturb the progress of the popular romance, yet not so much as one might expect. Chaucer and Gower, each in his own way, had challenged the French on their own ground; they had written English verse which might be approved by French standards; they had given to English verse the peculiar French qualities of ease and grace and urbanity. A reader to whom the fifteenth century was unknown would, naturally, look for some such consequences as followed in the reign of Charles II from

the work of Dryden and his contemporaries—a disabling of the older schools, and a complete revolution in taste. But, for whatever reason, this was not what actually followed the age of Chaucer. The fifteenth century, except for the fact that the anarchy of dialects is reduced to some order, is as far from any literary good government as the age before Chaucer. It is rather worse, indeed, on account of the weaker brethren in the Chaucerian school who only add to the confusion. And the popular romances go on very much as before, down to the sixteenth century, and even further. The lay of the last minstrel is described by Sir Walter Scott, in prose, in a note to *Sir Tristrem*:

> Some traces of this custom remained in Scotland till of late years. [illegible]

It is possible to classify the romances according to their sources and their subjects, though, as has been already remarked, the difference of scenery does not always make much difference in the character of the stories. The English varieties depend so closely on the French that one must go to French literary history for guidance. The whole subject has been so clearly summarised and explained in the *French Medieval Literature* of Gaston Paris[1] that it is scarcely necessary here to repeat even the general facts. But, of course, although the subjects are the same, the English point of view is different; especially in the following respects.

The "matter of France" includes the subjects of the old French epics. These, being national, could not bear exportation so well as some of the other "matters." It is only in France that the *Song of Roland* can be thoroughly understood and valued. Yet Roland and Charlemagne were honoured beyond the Alps and beyond the sea. The *Karlamagnus Saga* is a large book written in Norway in the thirteenth century, bringing together in a prose version all the chief stories of the cycle. One section, *Olif and Landres*, was found "in the English tongue in Scotland" by a Norwegian envoy who went there in 1281 after the death of king Alexander III. Roland was almost as popular in Italy as in France. He appears also in English, though not to very great advantage. The favourite

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> Some traces of this custom remained in Scotland till of late years. A satire on the Marquis of Argyle, published about the time of his death, is said to be composed to the tune of Graysteel, a noted romance reprinted at Aberdeen so late as the beginning of the last century. Within the memory of man, an old person used to perambulate the streets of Edinburgh, singing, in a monotonous cadence, the tale of Rosewal and Lilian, which is, in all the forms, a metrical romance of chivalry.

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[1] *La Littérature française au moyen âge* (with bibliography); also *Esquisse historique de la litt. fr. au moyen âge*; English translation of this latter, Dent, 1903.

story from the French epics was that of Oliver and Fierabras, where the motive is not so much French patriotism as the opposition between Christian and infidel.

In the "matter of Britain" the English had a better right to share. They accepted at once the history of Geoffrey of Monmouth and made king Arthur into an English national hero, the British counterpart of Charlemagne. The alliterative *Morte Arthure*, derived from Geoffrey, is a kind of political epic, with allusions to contemporary history and the wars of Edward III, as George Neilson has sufficiently proved[1]. This touch of allegory, which one need not be afraid to compare with the purpose of the *Aeneid* or of *The Faerie Queene*, makes it unlike most other medieval romances; the pretence of solidity and historical truth in Geoffrey is not suitable for mere romantic purposes. Quite different is the Arthur who merely sits waiting for adventures, being "somewhat child-geared," as the poet of *Sir Gawayne* says. In most of the stories, Arthur is very unlike the great imperial monarch and conqueror as presented by Geoffrey and his followers. He has nothing particular to do, except to be present at the beginning and end of the story; the hero is Sir Perceval, Sir Ywain, Sir Gawain, or the Fair Knight Unknown (Sir Libeaus); unfortunately not Sir Erec (Geraint), in any extant English poem before Tennyson. In this second order, the proper Arthurian romances as distinguished from the versions or adaptations of Geoffrey, England had something to claim even before the English rimers began their work; for some of the French poems certainly, and probably many now lost, were written in England. This is a debatable and difficult part of literary history; but, at any rate, it is plain that the more elaborate French Arthurian romances were not the only authorities for the English tales. Chrétien's *Yvain* is translated into English; but the French romance of *The Fair Unknown* is probably not the original of the English story of *Sir Libeaus* which, like the old Italian version, would seem to have had a simpler and earlier form to work upon. Likewise, the English *Sir Perceval* must, surely, come from something older and less complicated than Chrétien's *Conte del Graal*. It is at least a fair conjecture that these two romances belong to an earlier type, such as may have been hawked about in England by French or French-speaking minstrels; and, without any conjecture at all, they are different in their plots (not merely in their style) from the French work of Renaud de Beaujeu in the one case, and

[1] *Huchown of the Awle Ryale*, Glasgow, 1902, pp. 59—66.

Chrétien de Troyes in the other. *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight*, again, cannot be referred to any known French book for its original; and, in this and other ways, the English rendering of the "matter of Britain" goes beyond the French, or, to be more precise, is found to differ from the existing French documents.

The "matter of Rome the great," that is, classical antiquity, is well represented in English. There are several poems in rime and alliterative verse on Alexander and on Troy, some of them being fragmentary. The tale of Thebes, though often referred to, does not appear fully told till Lydgate took it up, nor the romantic version of the *Aeneid* (*Roman d'Énéas*) before Caxton's prose.

The classification under the three "matters" of France, Britain and Rome is not exhaustive; there are many romances which fall outside these limits. Some of them are due to French invention; for the twelfth century romantic school was not content always to follow merely traditional fables; they drew largely on older stories, fairy tales and relics of mythology; but, sometimes, they tried to be original and at least succeeded in making fresh combinations, like a modern novelist with his professional machinery. Perhaps the English poet of *Sir Gawayne* may have worked in this way, not founding his poem upon any one particular romance, but taking incidents from older stories and arranging them to suit his purpose. In French, the *Ipomedon* of Hue de Rotelande is an excellent specimen of what may be called the secondary order of romance, as cultivated by the best practitioners. The author's method is not hard to understand. He is competing with the recognised and successful artists; with Chrétien de Troyes. He does not trouble himself to find a Breton lay, but (like an Elizabethan dramatist with no Spanish or Italian novel at hand) sets himself to spin his own yarn. He has all the proper sentiments, and his rhetoric and rimes are easy work for him. For theme, he takes the proud young lady and the devoted lover; the true love beginning "in her absence," as the Irish story-tellers expressed it, before he has ever seen the princess; telling of his faithful service in disguise, his apparent slackness in chivalry, his real prowess when he "bears the gree" in three days of tournament, with three several suits of armour, the white, the red and the black. The incidents are not exactly new; but it is a good novel of its kind, and successful, as the English versions prove, for longer than one season. Hue de Rotelande takes some trouble about his details. He does not (like Chrétien

in his *Cligès*) attach his invention to the court of Arthur. He leaves Britain for new ground, and puts his scene in Apulia and Calabria—which might as well have been Illyria or Bohemia. And he does not imitate the names of the Round Table; his names are Greek, his hero is Hippomedon. In the same way Boccaccio, or his lost French original, took Greek names for his story of Palamon, and let it grow out of the wars of Thebes. So also Parthenopex de Blois, who was translated into English (*Partonope*), is Parthenopaeus. *William of Palerne*, without this classical prestige of name, is another example of the invented love-story, made by rearranging the favourite commonplaces. Another sentimental romance, *Amadas and Ydoine*, was well known in England, as is proved by many allusions, though no English version is extant; the poem was first composed, like *Ipomedon*, in Anglo-French[1].

Further, there were many sources besides Britain and Rome for authors in want of a plot. The far east began very early to tell upon western imaginations, not only through the marvels of Alexander in India, but in many and various separate stories. One of the best of these, and one of the first, as it happens, in the list of English romances, is *Flores and Blancheflour*. It was ages before *The Arabian Nights* were known, but this is just such a story as may be found there, with likenesses also to the common form of the Greek romances, the adventures of the two young lovers cruelly separated. By a curious process it was turned, in the *Filocolo* of Boccaccio, to a shape like that of Greek romance, though without any direct knowledge of Greek authors. *The Seven Sages of Rome* may count among the romances; it is an oriental group of stories in a setting, like *The Arabian Nights*—a pattern followed in the *Decameron*, in *Confessio Amantis* and in *The Canterbury Tales*.

Barlaam and Josaphat is the story of the Buddha, and *Robert of Sicily*, the "proud king," has been traced back to a similar origin. *Ypotis* (rather oddly placed along with Horn and the others in *Sir Thopas*) is Epictetus; the story is hardly a romance, it is more like a legend. But the difference between romance and legend is not always very deep; and one is reminded that Greek and eastern romantic plots and ideas had come into England long before, in the Old English *Saints' Lives*.

There is another group, represented, indeed, in French, but not in the same way as the others. It contains *The Gest of King Horn*

[1] Gaston Paris in *An English Miscellany*, Oxford, 1901, p. 386.

and *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*; both of these appear in French, but it is improbable that any French version was the origin of the English. These are northern stories; in the case of *Havelok* there is fair historical proof that the foundation of the whole story lies in the adventures of Anlaf Cuaran, who fought at Brunanburh; "Havelok," like "Aulay," being a Celtic corruption of the Scandinavian Anlaf or Olaf.

In *Horn* it is not so easy to find a definite historical beginning; it has been suggested that the original Horn was Horm, a Danish viking of the ninth century who fought for the Irish king Cearbhall, as Horn helped king Thurston in Ireland against the Payns, *i.e.* the heathen invaders with their giant champion. Also, it is believed that Thurston, in the romance, may be derived from the Norwegian leader Thorstein the Red, who married a grand-daughter of Cearbhall. But, whatever the obscure truth may be, the general fact is not doubtful that Horn's wanderings and adventures are placed in scenery and conditions resembling those of the ninth and tenth centuries in the relations between Britain and Ireland. Like *Havelok*, the story probably comes from the Scandinavian settlers in England; like *Havelok*, it passed to the French, but the French versions are not the sources of the English. There must have been other such native stories; there is still an Anglo-Norman poem of *Waldef* extant, *i.e. Waltheof*, and the story of *Hereward the Wake* is known, like that of *Waltheof* also, from a Latin prose tale. The short tale of *Athelston* may be mentioned here, and also the amazing long romance of *Richard Cœur de Lion*, which is not greatly troubled with the cares of the historian.

The varieties of style in the English romances are very great, under an apparent monotony and poverty of type. Between *Sir Beves of Hamtoun* and *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight* there is as wide an interval as between (let us say) "Monk" Lewis and Scott, or G. P. R. James and Thackeray. There are many different motives in the French books from which most of the English tales are borrowed, and there are many different ways of borrowing.

As regards verse, there are the two great orders, riming and blank alliterative. Of riming measures the most usual are the short couplet of octosyllabic lines, and the stanza called *rime couée, rithmus caudatus*.

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through consistently the riming couplet, which Layamon interchanges with blank lines. The verse is not governed by the octosyllabic law; it is not of Latin origin; it has a strange resemblance to the verse of Otfried in Old High German and to the accidental riming passages in Old English, especially in the more decrepit Old English verse:

Thanne him spac the godĕ king:
Wel brac thu thi nevening;
Horn thu go wel schüllè
Bi dalĕs and bi hüllè;
Horn thu ludĕ sunè
Bi dalĕs and bi dunè;
So schal thi namĕ springè
Fram kyngè to kyngè,
And thi fairnessè
Abutĕ Westernessè,
The strengthe of thinĕ hondè
In to evrech londè[1].

There is no other romance in this antique sort of verse. In the ordinary couplets just such differences may be found as in modern usage of the same measure. *Havelok* and *Orfeo, King Alisaunder* and *Ywain* have not exactly the same effect. *Havelok*, though sometimes a little rough, is not unsound; the poem of *Ywain and Gawain* is nearly as correct as Chaucer; *The Squire of Low Degree* is one of the pleasantest and most fluent examples of this verse in English. There is a pause at the end of every line, and the effect is like that of some ballads:

The squyer her hente in armes two,
And kyssed her an hundreth tymes and mo.
There was myrth and melody,
With harpe, gytron and sautry,
With rote, ribible and clokarde,
With pypes, organs and bombarde,
With other mynstrelles them amonge,
With sytolphe and with sautry songe,
With fydle, recorde and dowcemere,
With trompette and with claryon clere,
With dulcet pipes of many cordes,
In chambre revelyng all the lordes,
Unto morne that it was dayo[2].

Besides the short couplet, different types of common metre are used; very vigorously, with full rimes, in *Sir Ferumbras*—

Now bygynt a strong-batayl betwene this knyghtes twayne,
Ayther gan other hard assayle bothe wyth myght and mayne;
They hewe togadre wyth swerdes dent, faste with bothen hondes,
Of helmes and sheldes that fyr outwent, so sparkes doth of brondes[3];

[1] Ll. 205 sqq. [2] Ll. 1067 sqq. [3] Ll. 602 sqq.

and without the internal rime, in *The Tale of Gamelyn*, the verse of which has been so rightly praised[1].

Sir Thopas might be taken as the standard of the *rithmus caudatus*, but *Sir Thopas* itself shows that variations are admitted, and there are several kinds, besides, which Chaucer does not introduce.

In later usage this stanza is merely twofold, as in Drayton's *Nymphidia* or in *The Baby's Début*. In early days it was commonly fourfold, *i.e.* there are four *caudae* with the same rime:

And so it fell upon a daye
The palmare went to the wode to playe,
    His mirthes for to mene;
The knightes brake up his chamber dore
And fand the gold right in the flore
    And bare it unto the quene;
And als sone als scho saw it with sighte,
In swoning than fell that swete wighte
    For scho had are it sene!
Scho kissed it and said, "Allas!
This gold aughte Sir Isambras,
    My lord was wont to bene[2]."

Sometimes there are three lines together before each *cauda*, as in *Sir Perceval* and *Sir Degrevant* and others:

Lef, lythes to me
Two wordes or thre
Off one that was fair and fre,
    And felle in his fighte;
His righte name was Percyvelle,
He was fosterde in the felle,
He dranke water of the welle,
    And yitte was he wyghte!
His fadir was a noble mane
Fro the tyme that he begane;
Miche worchippe he wane
    When he was made knyghte;
In Kyng Arthures haulle,
Beste by-luffede of alle,
Percyvelle they gane hym calle,
    Who so redis ryghte.

While, as this example shows, there are different lengths of line, they are not all in eights and sixes. *Sir Libeaus*, particularly, makes very pretty play with a kind of short metre and a peculiar sequence of the rimes:

That maide kneldc in halle
Before the knightes alle
    And seide: My lord Arthour!
A cas ther is befalle,
Worse withinne walle
    Was never non of dolour!

[1] Saintsbury, *English Prosody*, I, p. 193.

[2] *Sir Isumbras*, ll 611 sqq.

My lady of Sinadoune
Is brought in strong prisoun
That was of greet valour;
Sche praith the sende her a knight
With herte good and light
To winne her with honour[1].

The *cauda* is usually of six syllables; but there is a variety with four, found in part of *Sir Beves*:

That erl is hors began to stride
His schold he hang upon is side
Gert with swerd;
Moste non armur on him come
Himself was bente the forthe some
Toward that ferd.

Allas that he nadde be war
Of is fomen that weren thar
Him forte schende;
With tresoun worth he ther islawe
And i-brouht of is lif-daw
Er he hom wende[2].

The *rime coueé* is a lyrical stanza, and there are other lyrical forms. One of the romances of *Octavian* is in the old Provençal and old French measure which, by roundabout ways, came to Scotland, and was used in the seventeenth century in honour of Habbie Simson, the piper of Kilbarchan, and, thereafter, by Allan Ramsay, Fergusson and Burns, not to speak of later poets.

The knyght was glad to skape so,
As every man is from hys foo;
The mayster lette ten men and moo
That ylke day,
To wende and selle that chyld hem fro
And that palfray[3].

The riming *Mort Arthur* is in a favourite eight-line stanza. *Sir Tristrem*, in most ways exceptional, uses a lyrical stave, like one of those in the collection of Laurence Minot, and very unlike anything that was permissible in the French schools of narrative at that time. It may be remembered, however, that the Italian romances of the fourteenth century and later used a form of verse that, at first, was lyrical, the *ottava rima*; there are other affinities in Italian and English popular literature, as compared with the French, common qualities which it would be interesting to study further[4].

The French originals of these English romances are almost universally in short couplets, the ordinary verse for all subjects,

[1] Ll. 145 sqq. [2] Ll. 199 sqq. [3] Ll. 879 sqq. [4] Gaston Paris, *opp. citt.*

after the *chansons de geste* had grown old-fashioned[1]. On the whole, and considering how well understood the short couplet was in England even in the thirteenth century, *e.g.* in *The Owl and the Nightingale*, it is rather surprising that there should be such a large discrepancy between the French and the English forms. There are many anomalies; thus, the fuller version of *Ipomedon*, by a man who really dealt fairly and made a brave effort to get the French spirit into English rime, is in *rime couée*; while the shorter *Ipomedon*, scamped work by some poor hack of a minstrel, is in the regular French couplet. It should be noted here that *rime couée* is later than couplets, though the couplets last better, finally coming to the front again and winning easily in *Confessio Amantis* and in *The Romaunt of the Rose*. There are many examples of re-writing: tales in couplets are re-written in stanzas; *Sir Beves*, in the earlier part, is one, *Sir Launfal* is another. *Horn Childe* is in the *Thopas* verse; it is the same story as *King Horn*, though with other sources, and different names and incidents.

In later times, the octosyllabic verse recovers its place, and, though new forms are employed at the close of the Middle Ages, such as rime royal (*e.g.* in *Generydes*) and the heroic couplet (in *Clariodus* and Sir Gilbert Hay's *Alexander*), still, for simple popular use, the short verse is the most convenient, as is proved by the chap-book romances, *Sir Eger* and *Roswall and Lilian*—also, one may say, by Sir David Lyndsay's *Squire Meldrum*. The curious riming alliterative verse of the *Awntyrs of Arthure* and *Rauf Coilyear* lasts well in Scotland; but it had never been thoroughly established as a narrative measure, and, though it is one of the forms recognised and exemplified in king James VI's *Art of Poesie*, its "tumbling verse" is there regarded as most fit for "flytings," which was, indeed, its usual function in the end of its days.

Alliterative blank verse came up in the middle of the fourteenth century and was chiefly used for romance, *Piers Plowman* being the only considerable long poem to be compared in weight with *The Troy Book* or *The Wars of Alexander*, though there are others of less compass which are still remarkable enough. Where the verse came from is not known clearly to anyone and can only be guessed. The facts are that, whereas the old verse

[1] There are exceptions; thus the French—or Anglo-Norman—*Beves* is in an epic measure; and, of course, some of the English romances are borrowed from French epics, like *Roland*, and *Sir Ferumbras*, and the alliterative poem of the Swan-Knight (*Chevelere Assigne*) which, though romantic enough in subject, belongs technically, in the original French, to the cycle of Godfrey of Bouillon.

begins to show many signs of decay before the Conquest, and reappears after the Conquest in very battered shapes, in Layamon and *The Bestiary* and *The Proverbs of Alfred*, the new order, of which *William of Palerne* is the earliest, has clearly ascertained some of the main principles of the ancient Teutonic line, and adheres to them without any excessive difficulty. The verse of these alliterative romances and of Langland, and of all the rest down to Dunbar and the author of *Scotish Feilde*, is regular, with rules of its own; not wholly the same as those of Old English epic, but partly so, and never at all like the helpless medley of Layamon. It must have been hidden away somewhere underground—continuing in a purer tradition than happens to have found its way into extant manuscripts—till, at last, there is a striking revival in the reign of Edward III. There are some hints and indications in the meantime. Giraldus the untiring, the untamed, with his quick wit and his lively interest in all manner of things, has a note comparing the Welsh and the English love of alliteration—as he compares the part-singing of Wales with that of the north country. He gives English examples:

Good is togedere gamen and wisdom,

a regular line, like those of the fourteenth century and unlike the practice of Layamon. Plainly, many things went on besides what is recorded in the surviving manuscripts. At any rate, the result in the fourteenth century alliterative poems is a noble one.

The plots of the romances are, like the style of them, not so monotonous as at first appears. They are not all incoherent, and incoherence is not found exclusively in the minstrels' tales; there are faults of composition in some of Chaucer's stories (*e.g. The Man of Law's Tale*), as manifest as those which he satirised in *Sir Thopas*. A great many of the romances are little better than hackneyed repetitions, made by an easy kaleidoscopic shuffling of a few simple elements. Perhaps *Sir Beves* is the best example of the ordinary popular tale, the medieval book of chivalry with all the right things in it. It might have been produced in the same way as *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, by allowing the audience to prescribe what was required. The hero's father is murdered, like Hamlet's; the hero is disinherited, like Horn; he is wooed by a fair Paynim princess; he carries a treacherous letter, like Hamlet again, "and beareth with him his own death"; he is separated from his wife and children, like St Eustace or Sir Isumbras; and exiled, like Huon of Bordeaux, for causing the death of the king's son. The horse Arundel is like Bayard in *The Four Sons of*

Aymon, and the giant Ascapart is won over like Ferumbras[1]. In the French original there was one conspicuous defect—no dragon. But the dragon is supplied, most liberally and with great success, in the English version. It makes one think of a good puppet-show; for example, the play of *Don Gayferos*, which drew Don Quixote into a passion. "Stay, your worship, and consider that those Moors which your worship is routing and slaying are not real Moors, but pasteboard!" Saracens are cheap in the old romances; King Horn rode out one day and bagged a hundred to his own sword. Yet there are differences; in *Sir Ferumbras*, which is no very ambitious poem, but a story which has shared with *Sir Beves* and *Sir Guy* the favour of simple audiences for many generations, there is another kind of fighting, because it comes from the Old French epic school, which gives full particulars of every combat, on the same scale as the *Iliad*. So far, the work is more solid than in *Sir Beves*. There are worse things, however, than the puppet-show of chivalry. The story of *Guy of Warwick*, for instance, is something of a trial for the most reckless and most "Gothic" reader; instead of the brightly coloured figures of Sir Beves or King Horn and their adversaries, there is a doleful, stale religion in it, a most trashy mixture of asceticism (like the legend of St Alexius), with the most hackneyed adventures. Not that commonplace adventures need be dull; sometimes even an increased acquaintance with parallels and variants and so forth may heighten the interest; as when Horn returns in disguise and sits down in the "beggars' row." It is natural to think of the beggars at the foot of the hall in the *Odyssey*; there is the same kind of scene in an Irish popular tale (*Blaiman*[2]), where a recognition takes place like that of King Horn. In comparing them, one seems to get, not, indeed, any clear theory of the way in which the ideas of stories are carried about the world, but a pleasant sense of the community of stories, so to speak, and of the relation between stories and real life, in different ages and places.

Traditional plots like those of the fairy tales appear in medieval romances; not often enough, one is inclined to say, and not always with any distinct superiority of the literary to the popular oral version. One example is *Sir Amadas*, which is the story of the grateful ghost, the travelling companion, *The Old*

[1] A resemblance has been traced between *Sir Beves* and some things in Firdusi. The east had its books of chivalry like the west, and nearly at the same time. Cf. Deutschbein, *Englische Sagengeschichte*.

[2] Curtin, *Hero Tales of Ireland*.

Wives' Tale. This story, one of the best known in all languages, has a strange power to keep its elements free of contamination. It is found in many mixed forms, it is true, but some of the latest folklore versions are distinct and coherent. There is an Irish version (*Beauty of the World*, given by Larminie in Gaelic and English) which, when compared with *Sir Amadas*, seems to prove that the authors of the metrical romances might possibly have done better if they had attended to the narrative, like the simple tellers of fairy tales, without troubling themselves as to the rhetoric of the French school. Another example of the same sort can be obtained by comparing *Sir Perceval* with some of the folklore analogues. *Sir Perceval* is one of the simplest of the old romances: it seems at first almost like a rude burlesque of the *Conte del Graal.* It is now commonly thought to be taken from an earlier lost French version of the same subject. However that may be, it shows the common roughness of the English as compared with the French tales; it is full of spirit, but it is not gentle. Percival in this romance is not like the Percival of Wolfram or of Malory; he is a rollicking popular hero who blunders into great exploits. The style, even for this sort of motive, is rather too boisterous. Again, in this case, as with *Sir Amadas*, there may be found a traditional oral rendering of some of the same matters which, in point of style, is better than the English metrical romance. The scene of the discourteous knight breaking in and insulting the king is found in the west Highland tale of *The Knight of the Red Shield*, in Campbell's collection, and it is told there with greater command of language and better effect.

"Breton lays" have been mentioned; the name meant for the English a short story in rime, like those of Marie de France, taken from Celtic sources. Some of these were more complex than others, but they were never spun out like the romances of Beves and Guy, and the best of them are very good in the way they manage their plot. Moreover, there is something in them of that romantic mystery which is less common in medieval literature than modern readers generally suppose; it is not often to be found in the professional fiction of the Middle Ages. But the Breton lays are nearer than other romances to the popular beliefs out of which romantic marvels are drawn, and they retain something of their freshness. The best in English are *Sir Orfeo* and *Sir Launfal.* The first of these, which is the story of Orpheus, is a proof of what can be done by mere form, the classical fable is completely taken over, and turned into a fairy tale; hardly any-

thing is left to it except what it owes to the Breton form (of thought and expression). It is a story like that of young Tamlane in the ballad, a rescue from the fairy, for Pluto has become the fairy king, and everything ends happily; Eurydice is brought back in safety. There is nothing wrong in the description of it as a "Breton lay," for it is wholly such a tale as the Bretons, and many other people, might have told without any suggestion from Greek or Latin. The English poem (no original is extant in French) is an utterly different thing from the rambling tales of chivalry. It has much of the quality that is found in some of the ballads; and, in time, through some strange fortune, it became itself a ballad, and was found in Shetland, not very long ago, with a Norse refrain to it[1].

The different versions of Launfal—*Landavall* in couplets, *Launfal Miles* of Thomas Chestre, in *rime couée*, and the degenerate *Sir Lambewell* of the Percy MS—have been carefully studied and made to exhibit some of the ordinary processes of translation and adaptation. They come from Marie de France—Thomas Chestre took something from the lay of *Graelent* besides the main plot of *Lanval*. The story is one of the best known; the fairy bride—

> The kinge's daughter of Avalon,
> That is an isle of the fairie
> In ocean full fair to see—

and the loss of her, through the breaking of her command. *The Wedding of Sir Gawain*, which, in another form, is *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, is from the same mythical region, and has some of the same merits.

The romance of *Sir Libeaus*, "the fair unknown," the son of Sir Gawain, is of different proportions, less simple and direct than *Orfeo* or *Launfal*. But it keeps some of the virtues of the fairy tale, and is one of the most pleasing of all the company of *Sir Thopas*. Adventures are too easily multiplied in it, but it is not a mere jumble of stock incidents. It is very like the story of Gareth in Malory, and, along with Gareth, may have suggested some things to Spenser, for the story of the Red Cross Knight. Also, the breaking of the enchantment in the castle of Busirane may owe something to *Sir Libeaus*: there seems to have been an old printed edition of *Libius Disconius*, though no printed copy is extant. The plot is a good one, the expedition of a young and untried knight to rescue a lady from enchantment; it is a pure

[1] Child, *Ballads*, No. 19.

romance of knight errantry, very fit to be taken as an example of that order, and, possibly, the best of all the riming tales that keep simply to the familiar adventures of books of chivalry. Sir Libeaus takes a long time to reach the palace of the two enchanters—"clerkes of nigremauncie"—who keep the lady of Sinaudon under their spells in the shape of a loathly worm. But the excursions and digressions have some spirit in them, and no confusion.

The elements of the plot in *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight*[1] are as ancient and unreasonable as are to be found in any mythology. No precise original has been found in French; but the chief adventure, the beheading game proposed by the Green Knight to the reluctant courtiers of king Arthur, occurs often in other stories. It comes in one of the stories of Cuchulinn in Irish[2]; it comes, more than once, in the French romances; *e.g.* in *La Mule sans Frein*, one of the best of the shorter stories, a strange old-fashioned chivalrous pilgrim's progress; and this, too, sets out from king Arthur's court, and the hero is Gawain. The beheading "jeopardy" is a most successful piece of unreason; "you may cut off my head, if only I may have a stroke at you some other day." Sir Gawain cuts off the Green Knight's head; the Green Knight picks it up; he summons Gawain to travel and find him by an appointed day, and submit his neck to the return-stroke. This is good enough, one would imagine, for a grotesque romance; one hears the reader quoting *aegri somnia* and reaffirming his contempt for the Middle Ages. Yet this romance of *Sir Gawayne* is very different from the ordinary books of chivalry; it is one of the most singular works of the fourteenth century, and it is one of the strongest, both in imagination and in literary art. The author loses nothing of the fantastic value of his plot; on the contrary, he does everything possible to heighten the effect of it, to a grotesque sublimity; while, at the same time, he is concerned, as Shakespeare often is, to transform the folklore with which he is working, and make it play into his moral scheme. He is a great moralist and he can use allegory; but, in his treatment of this story, his imagination is generally too strong for abstract methods. He succeeds (a very remarkable feat) in making his readers accept strange adventures as part of a reasonable man's life; not smoothing away or suppressing absurdities, but getting out of them everything possible in the way of terror and wonder; and

[1] See also Chapter xv, where this romance is further considered as part of the work of the author of *Pearl*.

[2] Cf. *Bricriu's Feast*, edited by G. Henderson for the Irish Texts Society.

using mockery also, like that of the northern myths of Thor and the giants. Allegory comes in, but accidentally, in the description of Gawain's shield and its device, the "pentangle," with its religious motive—Gawain as the servant of Our Lady; thus adding something more to the complexity of the work. It is a different thing from the simple beauty of the fairy tales; and, on the other hand, the common futilities of the minstrels are kept at a safe distance by this author. His landscape is not that of the ordinary books; Sir Gawain is not sent wandering in the conventional romantic scenery, but in the highlands of Wales in winter, all well known and understood by the poet, with thorough enjoyment of the season, "the flaky shower and whirling drift." This is not quite exceptional, for, though the winter passages of the Scottish Chaucerians are later, the alliterative poets generally were good at stormy weather; but there is none equal to the poet of *Sir Gawayne* in this kind of description. The three hunting scenes—of the hart, the boar and the fox—serve to bring out his talent further, while the way they are placed in contrast with the Christmas revels in the castle, show, at any rate, the writer's care for composition; symmetry of this sort may not be very difficult, but it is not too common at this time. The temptation of Sir Gawain and the blandishments of the lady may have been suggested by the French romance of *Ider*; but, as in the case of the other ordeal—the beheading game—the English poet has given his own rendering.

Sir Tristrem is a great contrast to *Sir Gawayne*, though both works are ambitious and carefully studied. The author of *Sir Gawayne* took some old wives' fables and made them into a magnificent piece of Gothic art; the other writer had one of the noblest stories in the world to deal with, and translated it into thin tinkling rimes.

Ysonde of heighe prils,
  The maiden bright of hewe,
That wered fow and griis
  And scarlet that was newe,
In warld was non so wiis
  Of crafte that men knewe,
Withouten Sir Tramtris
  That al games of grewe
      On grounde.
  Hom longeth Tramtris the trewe.
For heled was his wounde.

The author is so pleased with his command of verse that he loses

all proper sense of his tragic theme. Tristram and Iseult had to wait long for their poet, in England.

The *Tale of Gamelyn* may count for something on the native English side against the many borrowed French romances. It is a story of the youngest son cruelly treated by his tyrannical elder brother, and coming to his own again with the help of the king of outlaws. Thomas Lodge made a novel out of it, and kept a number of incidents—the defeat of the wrestler (the "championn" as he is called), the loyalty of Adam Spencer and the meeting with the outlaws—and so these found their way to Shakespeare, and, along with them, the spirit of the greenwood and its freedom. The *Tale of Gamelyn* is *As You Like It*, without Rosalind or Celia; the motive is, naturally, much simpler than in the novel or the play: merely the poetical justice of the young man's adventures and restoration, with the humorous popular flouting of respectability in the opposition of the liberal outlaws to the dishonest elder brother and the stupid abbots and priors.

"Ow!" seyde Gamelyn, "so brouke I my bon
Now I have aspyed that freendes have I non;
Cursed mot he worthe, bothe fleisch and blood
That ever do priour or abbot any good!"

The verse is, more or less, the same as that of Robert of Gloucester, and of the southern *Legends of Saints*; nowhere is it used with more freedom and spirit than in *Gamelyn*:

Then seide the maister, kyng of outlawes
"What seeke ye, yonge men, under woode-schawes?"
Gamelyn answerde the king with his croune,
"He moste needes walke in woode that may not walke in towne:
Sir, we walke not heer non harm for to do,
But if we meete with a deer to schute therto,
As men that ben hungry and mow no mete fynde,
And ben harde bystad under woode-lynde."

Gamelyn is found only in MSS of *The Canterbury Tales*; Skeat's conjecture is a fair one, that it was kept by Chaucer among his papers, to be worked up, some day, into *The Yeoman's Tale*.

Another romance, less closely attached to Chaucer's work, the *Tale of Beryn* (called *The Merchant's Second Tale*) is also, like *Gamelyn*, rather exceptional in its plot. It is a comic story, and comes from the east: how Beryn with his merchandise was driven by a storm at sea to a strange harbour, a city of practical jokers; and how he was treated by the burgesses there, and hard put to it to escape from their knavery; and how he was helped against the sharpers by a valiant cripple, Geoffrey, and shown the way to defeat them by tricks more impudent than their own.

The verse of *Beryn* is of the same sort as in *Gamelyn*, but more uneven; often very brisk, but sometimes falling into the tune of the early Elizabethan doggerel drama:

> After these two brethren, Romulus and Romus,
> Julius Cesar was Emperour, that rightful was of *domus*.

But, on the other hand, there are good verses like these:

> For after misty cloudes ther cometh a cler sonne
> So after bale cometh bote, whoso bide conne.

There are, obviously, certain types and classes among the romances; medieval literature generally ran in conventional moulds, and its clients accepted readily the well-known turns of a story and the favourite characters. But, at the same time, in reading the romances one has a continual sense of change and of experiment; there is no romantic school so definite and assured as to make any one type into a standard; not even Chaucer succeeded in doing what Chrétien had done two centuries earlier in France. The English romancers have generally too little ambition, and the ambitious and original writers are too individual and peculiar to found any proper school, or to establish in England a medieval pattern of narrative that might be compared with the modern novel.

> Sir Thopas he bereth the flour,

and the companions of *Sir Thopas*, who are the largest group, never think of competing seriously with the great French authors of the twelfth century, the masters, as they must be reckoned, of medieval romantic poetry. The English, like the Italians, were too late; they missed the twelfth century and its influences and ideals, or only took them up when other and still stronger forces were declaring themselves. They failed to give shape in English to the great medieval romantic themes; they failed in *Sir Tristrem*; and the Middle Ages were at an end before Sir Thomas Malory brought out the noblest of all purely medieval English romances, translated from "the French book" that was then nearly three centuries old.

The relation of the romances to popular ballads is not easy to understand. The romances and their plots go through many transformations; *Horn* and *Launfal* are proof of this. *Horn* turns into a ballad, and so do many others; the ballad of *Orfeo* has been mentioned. But it will not do to take the ballads in a lump as degenerate forms of earlier narrative poetry, for the ballad

a great number of ballads have plots which not only do not occur in any known romances (which, of itself, would prove little or nothing) but they are plainly not fitted for narrative of any length (*e.g. Lord Randal, Sir Patrick Spens, The Wife of Usher's Well*). On the whole, it seems best to suppose that the two forms of lyrical ballad and narrative romance were independent, though not in antagonism, through all the Middle Ages. They seem to have drawn their ideas from different sources, for the most part. Though almost anything may be made the subject of a ballad, there are certain kinds of plot that seem to be specially fitted for the ballad and much less for the long story; fairy adventures, like that of Tamlane, heroic defences against odds, like that of Parcy Reed and, before all, tragic stories, like Annie of Lochryan or the Douglas tragedy. The romances, as a rule, end happily, but there is no such law in ballads. It will be found, too, that the romances which have most likeness to ballads are generally among those of the shorter and simpler kind, like *Orfeo* and the *Lai le Freine*. The question is made more complicated by the use of ballad measure for some of the later romances, like *The Knight of Curtesy*, a strange version of *The Chevalier de Coucy*. Of *Robin Hood* and *Adam Bell* and many more, it is hard to say whether they are to be ranked with ballads or with romances. But all this is matter for another enquiry.

CHAPTER XIV

METRICAL ROMANCES, 1200—1500

II

The metrical romances which form during three centuries a distinctive feature of our literature must in no sense be regarded as an isolated phenomenon. They begin under the auspices of the twelfth century renascence. They supply a want while feudalism lasts. And they begin to vanish when feudalism crumbles in the wars of the Roses. It has been already said that legend and love were the two main themes of the twelfth century literary revolt against earlier religious traditions, and it is not without significance that they were precisely the themes of this new creation, the romance. It is true that the crusading zeal, and occasional Christianising tendencies, which characterise some of the romances, still point to militant religious forces, but religion ceases to supply the initial impulse, or to give direction. The *raison d'être* of the romances is of a secular kind. It was felt to be good to indulge the fancy and to hear of love, and so legendary and historical narratives and cheerful love-stories were, from time to time, related with no other motive than the telling of a good tale. The romance, then, obviously forms part of, or is, perhaps, the sequel to, that general emancipatory movement in literature which marked the twelfth century.

But the form and tone of the English romance were determined by more than one consideration. Political and social connections with France and Britanny rendered available a store of French material, and Welsh traditions, through the medium of Britanny, were found to increase that store. The movements of the crusaders brought the west into closer touch with the east. And, amidst all these alien influences, something of what was native still persisted. Nor must internal considerations be entirely forgotten. Neither social nor intellectual development failed to leave its mark upon this branch of literature. Woman had come to be regarded as of more importance than ever in the community. The literary tendencies which made for love-tales found their counterpart in the striving

towards higher ideals of conduct in relation to woman. Manners became more refined and a code of chivalry was evolved. Heightened sensibility was, moreover, revealed in the increased appreciation of the beautiful—the beauty of womanhood, the beauty of nature, the beauty of noble conduct. And the refinement of fancy made fairyland seem possible.

Jean Bodel's classification of the romances has already been mentioned. Regarding them, however, from the point of view of the motives and influences they embody, it is seen that they fall into certain groups: Carolingian or Old French, Old English, classical, oriental and Celtic.

The Carolingian element is represented in medieval English romance by *Sir Otuel*, *Roland and Vernagu* and *Sir Ferumbras*. The first is an account of a Saracen attack upon France. Sir Otuel is the Saracen emissary who insultingly defies Charlemagne in his own hall and is, in consequence, challenged by Roland. A stiff fight follows; but, in answer to Charlemagne's prayers, a white dove alights upon the shoulders of the Saracen; whereupon he capitulates and undertakes to embrace the Christian faith. *Roland and Vernagu* deals with Charlemagne's exploits in Spain. Its main incident consists of a combat, spread over two days, between Roland and Vernagu, the gigantic black champion of the sultan of Babylon. At one point of the protracted duel the giant is overcome with sleep; and this leads to an exhibition of knightly courtesy. So far from taking advantage of his slumbering rival, Roland seeks to make those slumbers easy by improvising a rough pillow beneath his head. *Sir Ferumbras* relates the capture of Rome by the Saracen hosts and its relief by Charlemagne. The usual combat takes place, this time between Olivier and Ferumbras, son of the sultan of Babylon. The Saracen is, as usual, overcome and accepts Christianity. His sister Floripas, who is in love with the French Sir Guy, afterwards her husband, assists the Christians, and both brother and sister are subsequently rewarded with territory in Spain.

In these works there is obviously embalmed the fierce heroic temper of the Carolingian era. The animating spirit is that of the crusades. Saracen champions are consistently worsted and forcibly persuaded, after sanguinary combat, of the beauties of Christian doctrine. The chivalrous ideal is still in the making, and the self-restraint and courtesy of Christian heroes are shown to contrast favourably with the brutal manners of Saracen

warriors. But chivalry, as such, is still a battle-field grace; its softening virtues have yet to be developed in other spheres of activity. The glory of womanhood lies in ferocity and daring, in a strong initiative, if needs be, in affairs of love. Floripas, in *Sir Ferumbras*, for the sake of her love, deceives her father, overpowers her governess and brains a jailor: and other Carolingian heroines like Blancheflour and Guiboux are similarly formidable.

The romances which spring directly from English soil are animated by essentially different motives and reflect a different society from that of the French group. In *Havelok* and *Horn*, in *Guy of Warwick* and *Beves of Hamtoun* there exists primarily the viking atmosphere of tenth century England, though the sagas, in their actual form, have acquired, through alien handling, a certain crusade colouring. In *Horn*, for instance, Saracens are substituted for vikings in plain disregard of historical verisimilitude; and again, in *Guy of Warwick*, the English legend has been invested with fresh motives and relentlessly expanded with adventures in Paynim. After removing such excrescences, however, we shall find something of earlier English conditions. Such situations as they depict, arising out of usurpation on the part of faithless guardians of royal children, spring, in a great measure, out of pre-Conquest unsettlement. They were situations not uncommon in the day of small kingdoms and restless viking hordes. *Havelok* is a tale of how a Danish prince and an English princess came to their own again. The hero, son of the Danish king Birkabeyn, is handed over by his wicked guardian Godard, to a fisherman Grim, to be drowned. A mystic light, however, reveals Havelok's royal birth to the simple Grim, who saves the situation by crossing to England. They land at Grimsby, a town that still cherishes the name of Havelok and the characters of the tale, in its *streets and its seal; and the hero, by a happy* coincidence, drifts, as a kitchen-boy, into the household of Godrich, guardian of Goldburgh. This guardian, however, is no better than Godard, for he has likewise deprived the daughter of the English Aethelwold of her inheritance. Havelok is a strong, handsome youth, who soon becomes famous for feats of strength; whereupon Godrich, who had promised Aethelwold that he would marry Goldburgh to the "best man" in the country, maliciously keeps his promise by forcing her to marry his "cook's knave," a popular hero by reason of his athletic deeds. By degrading

Goldburgh into a churl's wife, Godrich hopes to make his hold upon her inheritance secure. The princess naturally bewails her lot when led away by Havelok, but she becomes reconciled when mysterious signs assure her, as they had previously assured Grim, of her husband's royal origin. Meanwhile, the faithful Ubbe, who has set matters right in Denmark, appears in England, when all wrongs are righted and the united futures of hero and heroine are straightway assured.

Horn is a viking story plainly adapted to romantic ends. The hero is the youthful son of the king of Suddene (Isle of Man), who, after the death of his father, at the hands of raiding Saracens (vikings), is turned adrift in a rudderless boat. Wind and tide bring the boat with its living freight to the land of Westernesse (Wirral?), where the princess Rymenhild, falling in love with the stranded hero, endeavours, with womanly art, to win his love in return. Horn is knighted through Rymenhild's good offices; but, before he can surrender himself to the pleasant bondage of love, he longs to accomplish knightly deeds. He therefore departs in quest of adventure, but leaves behind him a traitorous companion, Fikenhild, who reveals to the king the secret of the lovers. Horn is banished and only returns on learning that Rymenhild is about to wed. He appears in pilgrim garb, is forgiven and rescues the princess from a distasteful suitor. But, after marriage, the old knightly instincts again assert themselves; and he crosses to Suddene, which he rids of invaders. The treacherous Fikenhild had, however, in the meantime carried off Rymenhild, and Horn, after avenging this deed, returns once more to his homeland, this time not alone.

In the ponderous but popular *Guy of Warwick* we recognise a tedious expansion of a stirring English legend. Sir Guy was regarded as a national hero, who, by his victory over Colbrand the Dane, had rescued England from the grip of the invader. In the romance this appears—but in company with other episodes which destroy the simplicity of the earlier narrative, confuse its motive and change its colouring. When he first comes on the scene, Guy is madly in love with Felice the beautiful daughter of the earl of Warwick; but his suit is denied on account of his inferiority of standing, for he is but the son of the earl's steward. He, therefore, ventures abroad, and returns in a few years, laden with honours: but only to be repulsed once more by his too scrupulous mistress, who now fears that wedded life may transform her hero into a slothful and turgid knight.

Once more he goes abroad; and, after brisk campaigning, he is welcomed on his return by Aethelstan, at whose request he rids Northumbria of an insatiable dragon. After this, Felice can hold out no longer. The lovers are united; but now Guy begins to entertain scruples. The rest of his life is to be spent in hardship and penance, and he leaves again for uncouth lands. He returns in due course to find king Aethelstan hard pressed by the Danish Anlaf; but Guy's overthrow of Colbrand saves the kingdom and he sets out forthwith on his way to Warwick. Disguised as a palmer, he finds his wife engaged in works of charity; but, without revealing his identity, he stoically retires to a neighbouring hermitage, where the much-tried couple are finally united before he breathes his last.

Beves of Hamtoun, like *Horn*, springs from English soil, but the transforming process traced in the one is completed in the other. *Beves* presents almost entirely crusading tendencies, but few traces remain of the earlier form. Beves, who has been despatched as a slave to heathen parts by a treacherous mother, ultimately arrives at the court of the Saracen king Ermyn. Here he is the recipient of handsome favours, and is offered the hand of the princess Josian, on condition that he forsakes the Christian faith. This he refuses to do, but the valour he displays in staggering exploits still keeps him in favour, and Josian, for his love, is prepared to renounce her native gods. The king hears of this, and Beves is committed to a neighbouring potentate, by whom he is kept in a horrible dungeon for some seven years. After a marvellous escape from his terrible surroundings, Beves seeks out Josian, and both flee to Cologne, where they are duly wedded. The hero's career continues to be as eventful as ever; but he is finally induced to turn towards home, where he succeeds in regaining his inheritance, and is recognised as a worthy knight by the reigning king Edgar.

In attempting to estimate the contribution made by these four works to Middle English romance, it must be remembered that, although they originate ultimately from the England of the vikings, of Aethelstan and Edgar, they have all been touched with later foreign influences. In them may be perceived, however, an undeveloped chivalry, as well as reminiscences of Old English life and thought. The code of chivalry is as yet unformulated. In *Havelok* we see the simple ideal of righting the wrong. In *Horn* and *Guy of Warwick* is perceptible a refinement of love which makes for asceticism; but the love details are not, in general, elaborated in accordance with later chivalrous ideals.

Rymenhild and Josian both woo and are wooed; but they lack the violence of Carolingian heroines. In Felice alone do we find traces of that scrupulous niceness encouraged in the era of the courts of love. With regard to the existence of earlier English reminiscences, in both *Horn* and *Havelok* can be seen the joy in descriptions of the sea characteristic of Old English verse. Both Guy and Beves, again, have their dragons to encounter after the fashion of Beowulf. The marvellous, which, to some extent, appears in *Havelok*, is of the kind found in Germanic folk-lore; it is distinct in its essence from the product of Celtic fancy. The plebeian elements in the same work, which embody a detailed description of humble life, and which are in striking contrast to the monotonous aristocratic colouring of the romance elsewhere, witness, undoubtedly, to a primitive pre-Conquest community. And, last, Guy's great fight with Colbrand breathes the motive of patriotism —the motive of Byrhtnoth—rather than the religious zeal which fired crusading heroes in their single combats.

The English medieval romance levied contributions also upon the literature of antiquity. Such levies were due neither to crusading zeal, which loved to recall Charlemagne's great fights against Saracen hosts, nor to the impulse which clung tightly to native history and homespun stories. They were, rather, the outcome of a cherished conceit based on a piece of ingenious etymology, according to which Englishmen, as inhabitants of Britain, held themselves to be of Trojan descent in virtue of Brutus. In this way did the literature of antiquity suggest itself as, to some extent, an appropriate field for the business of romancing. The *Gest Hystoriale of the Destruction of Troy* and *King Alisaunder* may be taken as typical of this class. The former of these consists of an epitome of the well-known story with, however, many modifications characteristic of medieval genius. It sets forth the antique world interpreted in terms of medievalism; Greek warfare, Greek customs and Greek religion alike appearing in the garb of the Middle Ages. And, together with these changes, were tacitly introduced fairy reminiscences and magical details. But, most interesting of all, in the Troy narrative, are those elements of the story of Troilus and Briseida taken over from Benoît de Ste More, and subsequently moulded into one of the world's greatest stories.

In *King Alisaunder* we see fashioned the historical and legendary hero, his career being supplemented with hosts of fanciful stories drawn from the east. His birth is alike mysterious and marvellous.

His youth and manhood are passed in prodigious undertakings. He tames the fiery Bucephalus. He captures Tyre and burns Thebes. Darius falls before him. He advances through Persia and onwards to the Ganges, conquering, on his way, the great Porrus of India. His homeward journey is a progress through wonderland. All the magic of the east lies concentrated in his path; he passes by crowned snakes and mysterious trees, and beholds, in the distance, cliffs sparkling with diamonds. He is ultimately poisoned by a friend and honourably buried in a tomb of gold.

The ruling motive of these classical romances, as compared with others of their kind, is clearly that of depicting, on a large scale, the heroic element in humanity and of pointing out the glories of invincible knighthood. They concern themselves, not with chivalrous love, but with chivalrous valour and knightly accomplishments. Their aim is to point to the more masculine elements of medieval chivalry. The joy of battle is everywhere articulate—not least so in the picturesque movements of warlike bodies, and in the varied sounds of the battlefield. The method of developing this motive is, for the most part, by bringing the west into touch with the east. The treasuries of Babylonian and antique fable are ransacked to glorify the theme of warlike magnificence. The wider mental horizon and the taste for wonders which attracted contemporaries in *Mandeville's Travels* are here enlisted in the work of romance.

Closely akin to the Alexander romance is *Richard Cœur de Lion*, which may, therefore, be considered here, though its story is not of either eastern or classical origin. The scheme in both is much the same. Richard's birth is mysterious as was Alexander's. In early manhood Richard wrenches out the lion's heart; Alexander tames Bucephalus. Both march to the east to perform great things: both are presented as types of valorous greatness. In the romance, Richard appears as the son of Henry II and the beautiful enchantress Cassodorien. He is imprisoned in Germany as the result of an escapade on his way home from the Holy Land, and it is here that he tears out the heart of a lion set loose in his cell. The proclamation of a general crusade soon afterwards appeals to Richard and he joins Philip of France on his way to the east. The French king is consistently treacherous and jealous, while Richard is no less hasty and passionate, and, in consequence, ruptures are frequent. After avenging an insult received from Cyprus, Richard hastens to Syria, where fight succeeds fight with great regularity, and the Saracens under Saladin are gradually

discomfited. At last a truce of three years is arranged, at which point the romancer is content to conclude. The romance is one of the most stirring of the whole group. It deals with the crusades; but its central theme, like that of the Alexander saga, is the glorification of the romance of war, the exaltation of the fighting hero. It is, moreover, fiercely patriotic. Scorn is heaped on the braggadocio of the French, and the drawing of Philip's character is far from flattering. On the other hand, Cœur de Lion's haughty arrogance is the glory of Englishmen; on his side fight St George and big battalions of angels. His humour appears as grim as his blows. He feasts on Saracens and provides the same dish for Saracen ambassadors. The ideal man of action, as here depicted, is one in whom the elements are mixed. He is by no means deficient in knightly instincts and courtesy; but, mingled with these, are coarse-grained characteristics. He is rude and blunt, forceful and careless of restraint—all of which traits represent the English contribution to the heroic picture.

Oriental fable appears in English romance with other effects than were obtained in the work of *King Alisaunder*. The more voluptuous qualities of the east, for instance, are reproduced in *Flores and Blancheflour* and result in a style of romance tolerably distinct. In *The Seven Sages of Rome*, again, the story-book is employed in oriental fashion. The heroine of the first, Blancheflour, is a Christian princess carried off by the Saracens in Spain and subsequently educated along with their young prince Flores. Childish friendship develops into love, and Flores is promptly removed—but not before his lady has given him a magic ring which will tarnish when the giver is in danger. Danger soon threatens her in the shape of false accusation; but this peril, being revealed to Flores by means of his ring, is duly averted, though subsequent treachery succeeds in despatching the princess to Egypt as a slave. Thither Flores pursues her; and, by dint of bribery and stratagem, he succeeds in entering the seraglio where she is detained. The inevitable discovery follows, but the anger of the emir having vanished on his learning all the circumstances, the trials of the lovers come to a pleasant end. In this work the central theme is, once again, that of love; but, in the manner of treatment, there are visible certain departures. According to western standards, the tone is, in fact, somewhat sentimental. It is felt that soul-stirring passions are not involved; the whole seems wanting in the quality of hardihood.

Flores, for instance, swoons in your true sentimental fashion. He finds heart's-ease in exile by tracing his lady's name in flower-designs. He wins his cause by dint of magic and persuasion rather than by the strength of his own right arm. An oriental colouring is also noticeable in the sensuous descriptions of garden and seraglio, as well as in the part played by the magic ring. We have here material and motives which enlarged the domain of the medieval romance, and which appealed to Chaucer when he set about writing his *Squire's Tale*. In *The Seven Sages of Rome* other aspects of the east are duly represented. Diocletian's wicked queen, failing in her attempt to ensnare her stepson Florentine, viciously accuses him of her own fell designs. Whereupon, Florentine's seven tutors plead on his behalf by relating seven tales of the perfidy of woman. The queen, as plaintiff, relates a corresponding number concerning the wickedness of counsellors. The tales are told, the queen is unmasked and duly punished. In an age dedicated by the west to the worship of women we have here represented the unflattering estimate of womankind held by the east. The framework and the device of a series of tales is, likewise, oriental, and so is the didactic tendency which underlies the whole. The aim is to set forth the dangers to which youth is subject, not only from the deceit of men, but, also, from the wiles of women.

Of far greater importance, however, than any of the foregoing influences is that derived from Celtic sources. The stories of Arthur, of Tristram and Gawain, while, in response to formative influences of the time, they present certain details in common with the other romances, have yet a distinct atmosphere, fresh motives and new colouring. Points of similarity exist, but with a difference. The incessant combats of the Carolingian saga find a counterpart in the "derring-doe" of Arthurian heroes. As in *Horn* and *Havelok*, the scene in the Celtic romances is laid in Britain; but the background is Celtic rather than English. Again, just as *King Alisaunder* and *Richard Cœur de Lion* are *magnificats* of splendid heroic figures, so the glorification of Arthur is the persistent theme of this Celtic work. And, last, the love-strain and the magic which came from the east, and were embodied in *Flores and Blancheflour*, correspond, in some measure, with Celtic passion and Celtic mysticism. For such points of contact the spirit of the age must be held accountable: for such differences as exist, individual and national genius.

The effect of the Celtic genius upon English romance, if, indeed, such a statement may be ventured upon, was to reveal the passions, to extend the fancy and to inculcate sensibility. The Celtic element revealed love as a passion in all its fulness, a passion laden with possibilities, mysterious and awful in power and effect. It opened up avenues to a fairy-land peopled with elvish forms and lit by strange lights. It pointed to an exalted chivalry and lofty ideals, to a courtesy which was the outcome of a refinement of sentiment.

In the romance of Sir Tristram is embodied the Celtic revelation of love. The English poem is based on the version of Thomas, and is distinct from that of Béroul. This story of "death-marked" affection is well known: how Tristram and the fair Iseult are fatally united by the magic love-potion, quaffed in spite of Iseult's approaching union with Mark of Cornwall; how their love persists in spite of honour and duty; how Tristram marries Iseult of the White Hand and comes to lie wounded in Britanny; how his wife, distracted with jealousy, falsely announces the ominous black sail coming over the seas; and how the fair Iseult glides through the hall and expires on the corpse of her former lover. Here we feel that the tragedy of love has been remorselessly enacted. It appears to us as a new and irresistible force, differing alike from the blandishments of the east and the crudeness of the north. A sense of mystery and gloom enfolds it all like a misty veil over cairn and cromlech. The problem is as enduring as life itself. Enchantment is suggested by means of the love-potion, yet the weakness is mortal, as, indeed, is the sombre climax. Passion descends to the level of reality, and the comfortable medieval ending is sternly eschewed. Love is conducted by neither code nor nice theory: it moves, simple, sensuous, passionate, to its appointed end, and relentlessly reveals the poetry of life.

In the romances which deal with the relations between mortal and fairy we find elements of the richest fancy. Here and elsewhere, in this Celtic section, are discovered landscapes and scenes which charm the imagination with their glamour and light. Fays come and go, wrapped in ethereal beauty, and horrible spirit-shapes appear to the accompaniment of mad symphonies of the elements. Knights of faërie emerge out of weird forbidden tracts, strange enchantments dictating or following their various movements. Mystic commands lightly broken entail tragic penalties, and mortals become the sport of elvish visitants.

Of the romances which relate to love-passages between mortal and fairy, *Sir Launfal*, *Sir Orfeo* and *Emarè* may be taken as

types. In *Sir Launfal*, the hero receives love-favours from a beautiful fay, but breaks his bond by carelessly betraying his secret to the queen. He is condemned to death and abandoned by the fay, who, however, relents in time and, riding to Arthur's court, succeeds in carrying the knight off to the Isle of Avalon. *Sir Orfeo* may be briefly described as a Celtic adaptation of the familiar classical story of Orpheus and Eurydice. Queen Heurodys is carried off into fairyland, in spite of all that human efforts can do. King Orfeo follows her in despair, as a minstrel, but his wonderful melodies at last succeed in leading her back to the haunts of men. In *Emarè* we have a beautifully told story of the Constance type, with the addition of certain mystical elements. The heroine is a mysterious maiden of unearthly beauty who is cast off by her unnatural father and drifts to the shores of Wales where she wins Sir Cador's love. After the marriage, Sir Cador goes abroad, and the young wife is once more turned adrift by an intriguing mother-in-law. She reaches Rome, and there, in due course, she is happily discovered by the grief-stricken Cador. Other romances relate the deeds of the offspring of fairy and mortal union as, for instance, *Sir Degare* and *Sir Gowther*. The former is an account of the son of a fairy knight and a princess of Britain. He is abandoned in infancy by the princess, who, however, leaves with him a pair of magic gloves which will fit no hands but hers. The child in time becomes a knight, and his prowess in the lists renders him eligible for the hand of the princess, his mother. By means of the gloves, however, they learn their real relationship; whereupon Sir Degare relinquishes his claim and succeeds in the filial task of re-uniting his parents. In *Sir Gowther*, the hero is the son of a "fiendish" knight and a gentle lady whom he had betrayed. The boy, as was predicted, proved to be of a most savage temperament, until the offending Adam was whipped out of him by means of self-inflicted penance. He then wins the love of an earl's daughter by glorious achievements in the lists, and piously builds an abbey to commemorate his conversion.

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over *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight*, which is treated elsewhere, we find in *Golagros and Gawane* these knightly elements plainly visible. The rudeness of Sir Kay, here and elsewhere, is devised as a foil to the courtesy of Gawain. Arthur in Tuscany sends Sir Kay to ask for quarters in a neighbouring castle. His rude, presumptuous bearing meets with refusal, though, when Gawain arrives, the request is readily acceded to. The domains of Golagros are next approached. He is an aggressive knight of large reputation, whom Arthur makes it his business forthwith to subdue. A combat is arranged, in which Gawain proves victor; whereupon the noble Arthurian not only grants the life of the defiant Golagros, but spares his feelings by returning to his castle as if he himself were the vanquished. Matters are afterwards explained, and Golagros, conquered alike by arms and courtesy, becomes duly enrolled in Arthur's train. In the *Awntyrs* [Adventures] *of Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne* we find something of the same elements, together with an exhortation to moral living. The romance deals with two incidents alleged to have occurred while Arthur was hunting near Carlisle. The first, however, is an adaptation of the *Trentals of St Gregory*. A ghastly figure is represented as emerging from the Tarn, and appearing before Guinevere and Gawain. It is Guinevere's mother in the direst torments. The queen thereupon makes a vow as to her future life, and promises, meanwhile, to have masses sung for her mother's soul. The second incident is of a more conventional kind, and deals with the fight between Gawain and Galleroun.

Ywain and Gawain is another romance which embodies much that is characteristic of Arthurian chivalry. Ywain sets out on a certain quest from Arthur's court. He defeats a knight near the fountain of Broceliande, pursues him to his castle and marries Laudine, mistress of that place. After further adventures in love and war, in most of which he has the company of a friendly lion, he falls in with Gawain and, ignorant of each other's identity, they engage in combat. The fight is indecisive, and each courteously concedes to the other the victory—an exchange of compliments which is speedily followed by a joyful recognition. The *Wedding of Sir Gawain*, again, points to loyalty and honour, as involving supreme self-sacrifice. It relates how Gawain, to save Arthur's life, undertakes to marry the loathsome dame Ragnell. His noble unselfishness, however, is not unrewarded: the dame is subsequently transformed into the most beauteous of her kind. *Libeaus Desconus*, the story of Gyngalyn, Gawain's son, is constructed

on rather conventional lines. The fair unknown has several adventures with giants and others. He visits a fairy castle, where he meets with an enchantress, and rescues a lady transformed into a dreadful serpent, who, afterwards, however, becomes his wife. The scene of the *Avowing of Arthur* is once more placed near Carlisle. Arthur is hunting with Sir Gawain, Sir Kay and Sir Baldwin, when all four undertake separate vows. Arthur is to capture single-handed a ferocious boar; Sir Kay to fight all who oppose him. The king is successful; but Sir Kay falls before a knight who is carrying off a beautiful maiden. The victor, however, is afterwards overcome in a fight with Gawain, and then ensues a significant contrast in the matter of behaviours. Sir Kay sustains his earlier reputation by cruelly taunting the beaten knight; while Sir Gawain, on the other hand, mindful of the claims of chivalry, is studiously kind and considerate towards his fallen foe. The riming *Mort Arthur,* and the alliterative work of the same name, deal with the close of Arthur's life. In the first occurs the story of the maid of Ascolot, and her fruitless love for the noble Lancelot. The narrative is instinct with the pathos of love, and here, as in *Tristram,* the subtlety of the treatment reveals further possibilities of the love theme. Lancelot is, moreover, depicted as Guinevere's champion. The queen is under condemnation, but is rescued by Lancelot, who endures, in consequence, a siege in the Castle of Joyous Garde. The end of the Arthurian story begins to be visible in the discord thus introduced between Lancelot and Gawain, Arthur and Modred. The alliterative *Morte Arthure* is more seriously historical. Arthur is represented as returning home from his wars with Lucius on hearing of Modred's treachery. He fights the traitor, but is mortally wounded, and is borne to Glastonbury, where he is given a magnificent burial.

In addition to the romances already mentioned as representative in some measure of definite influences at work, there yet remain certain others which call for notice. We have, in the first place, a group of some five romances which may be considered together as studies of knightly character. They are works which may be said to deal, incidentally perhaps, with the building up of the perfect knight and Christian hero, though anything like psychological treatment is, of course, entirely absent. In *Ipomedon,* we see the knight as a gallant if capricious lover. Marriage having been proposed between young Ipomedon, prince of Apulia, and the beautiful

queen of Calabria, the former determines to woo for himself. He arrives incognito at the court of the queen, wins her favour by manly exploits, and then departs somewhat capriciously. He is, however, induced to return on hearing that a tournament is to be held of which the queen herself is to be the prize. But, again, his conduct is strange. He loudly proclaims his dislike for boisterous tournaments, and ostentatiously sets out on hunting expeditions on the days of the contests. But he actually goes to a neighbouring hermitage, whence he issues to the tournament, clad, on successive days, in red, white and black armour—a favourite medieval method of disguise adopted by Sir Gowther and others. He carries all before him and then vanishes as mysteriously as ever, without claiming his prize or revealing his identity. Soon afterwards, the queen is hard pressed by a neighbouring duke, and the hero appears once more to fight her battles, this time disguised as a fool. It is only after further adventures, when he feels he has fooled to the top of his bent, that he declares his love with a happy result. In this stirring romance we see the knight-errant in quest of love. The assumed slothfulness and fondness for disguise were frequent attributes of the medieval hero: the one added interest to actual exploits, the other was an assurance that the love of the well-born was accepted on his own individual merits.

In the beautiful romance of *Amis and Amiloun* we have friendship set forth as a knightly virtue. It is depicted as an all-absorbing quality which involves, if necessary, the sacrifice of both family and conscience. Amis and Amiloun are two noble foster-brothers, the medieval counterparts of Orestes and Pylades, much alike in appearance, whose lives are indissolubly linked together. Amiloun generously, but surreptitiously, takes the place of Amis in a trial by combat, for which piece of unselfishness, with the deception involved in it, he is, subsequently, visited with the scourge of leprosy. Some time afterwards, Amis finds his friend in pitiable plight, but fails, at first, to grasp his identity. It is only after a dramatic scene that the discovery is made, and then Amis, grief-stricken, proceeds to remove his friend's leprosy by the sacrifice of his own children. But such a sacrifice is not permitted to be irrevocable. When Amis and his wife Belisante go to view their slaughtered children, they are found to be merely sleeping. The sacrifice had been one upon which the gods themselves threw incense. The romance, as it stands, is one of the most pathetic and elevating of the whole series.

Knightly love and valour were eloquent themes of the

medieval romance: in *Amis and Amiloun*, the beauty of friendship is no less nobly treated. In *Sir Cleges*, the knightly character is further developed by the inculcation of charity, wit and shrewdness. The story is simply, but picturesquely, told. The hero is a knight who is reduced to poverty by reckless charity. When his fortunes are at their lowest ebb he finds a cherry-tree in his garden laden with fruit, though snow is on the ground and the season is yuletide. With this goodly find he sets out to king Uther at Cardiff, in the hope of restoring his fallen fortunes; but court officials bar his way until he has promised to divide amongst them all his reward. The king is gratified, and Cleges is asked to name his reward. He asks for twelve strokes, which the officials, in accordance with the bargain, duly receive, to the unbounded delight of an appreciative court. The identity of the knight then becomes known and his former charity is suitably recognised.

The theme of *Sir Isumbras* is that of Christian humility, the story itself being an adaptation of the legend of St Eustace. Sir Isumbras is a knight who, through pride, falls from his high estate by the will of Providence. He is severely stricken; his possessions, his children and, lastly, his wife, are taken away; and he himself becomes a wanderer. After much privation nobly endured, he has learnt his lesson and arrives at the court of a queen, who proves to be his long-lost wife. His children are then miraculously restored and he resumes once more his exalted rank.

The Squire of Low Degree is a pleasant romance which does not belie an attractive title. Its theme suggests the idea of the existence of knightly character in those of low estate, a sentiment which had appealed to a conquered English people in the earlier *Havelok*. The humble squire in the story wins the affection of "the king's daughter of Hungary," as well as her promise to wed when he shall have become a distinguished knight. An interfering and treacherous steward is righteously slain by the squire, who then suffers imprisonment, and the king's daughter, who supposes her lover dead, is thereby reduced to the direst straits. She refuses consolation, though the king categorically reminds her of much that is pleasant in life and draws up, in fact, an interesting list of medieval delights, its feasts, its finery, its sports and its music. Persuasion failing, the king is obliged to relent. The squire is released and ventures abroad on knightly quest. He returns, in due course, to claim his own, and a pleasant romance ends on a pleasant note. The story loses nothing from the manner

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of its telling; it is, above all, "mercifully brief." Its English origin and sentiment, no less than its pictures of medieval life, continue to make this romance one of the most readable of its kind.

Besides these romances which deal, in some sort, with the knightly character, there are others which embody variations of the Constance theme, namely, *Sir Triamour, Sir Eglamour of Artois* and *Torrent of Portugal.* Like *Emarè*, they belong to the "reunion of kindred" type—a type which appealed to Chaucer and, still more, to Shakespeare in his latest period. One well-known romance still calls for notice. This is *William of Palerne,* a tale of love and action which embodies the primitive belief in lycanthropy, according to which certain people were able to assume, at will, the character and appearance of wolves. The tradition was widespread in Europe, and it still appears from time to time in modern works dealing with ghouls and vampires. The story relates how William, prince of Apulia, is saved from a murderous attack by the aid of a werwolf, who, in reality, is heir to the Spanish throne. The werwolf swims with the prince across the straits of Messina, and again renders aid when his *protégé* is fleeing from Rome with his love, Melchior. William, subsequently, recovers his royal rights, and then helps to bring about the restoration to the friendly werwolf of his human form.

It is striking and, to some extent, characteristic of the age, that, although the field of English romance was thus wide and varied, the personality of scarcely a single toiler in that field has come down to posterity. The anonymity of the work embodied in our ancient cathedrals is a parallel to this, and neither fact is without its significance. With the Tristram legend is connected the name of Thomas, a poet of the twelfth century, who is mentioned by Gottfried of Strassburg in the early thirteenth century. The somewhat misty but historical Thomas of Erceldoune has been credited with the composition of a Sir Tristram story, but this was possibly due to a confusion of the twelfth century Thomas with his interesting namesake of the succeeding century. The confusion would be one to which the popular mind was peculiarly susceptible. Thomas the Rhymer was a romantic figure credited with prophetical gifts, and a popular tale would readily be linked with his name, especially as such a process was consistent with the earlier Thomas tradition as it then existed.

In the case of three other romances there seem to be certain grounds for attributing them to a single writer. All three works,

King Alisaunder, *Arthur and Merlin* and *Richard Cœur de Lion*, are, apparently, of much the same date, and alike hail from Kent. Each is animated by the same purpose—that of throwing on to a large canvas a great heroic figure; there is also to be found in each of them a certain sympathy with magic. The handling of the theme in each case proceeds on similar lines; the close parallel in the schemes of *King Alisaunder* and *Richard Cœur de Lion* has already been noticed; and the narrative, in each, moves along in easy animated style. Moreover, similarities of technique are found in all. The recurrence of similes and comparisons as well as riming peculiarities in common, suggest the working of a single mind. In *King Alisaunder* and *Arthur and Merlin* appears the device of beginning the various sections of the narrative with lyric, gnomic, or descriptive lines, presumably to arouse interest and claim attention. In *Richard Cœur de Lion* something of the same tendency is also visible, as when a delightful description of spring is inserted after the gruesome account of the massacre of a horde of Saracens. All three works betray a joy in fighting, a joy expressed in vigorous terms. In all is evinced an ability to seize on the picturesque side of things, whether of battle or feasting; Saracens fall "as grass before the scythe"; the helmets of the troops shine "like snow upon the mountains." But if the identity of a common author may thus seem probable, little or nothing is forthcoming as regards his personality. Certain coarse details, together with rude humour, seem to suggest a plebeian pen; and this is, apparently, supported by occasional references to trades. But nothing certain on the subject can be stated. The personality of the poet is, at best, but shadowy, though, undoubtedly, his work is of outstanding merit.

In certain respects these romances may be said to reflect the age in which they were written. They bear witness in two ways to the communistic conception of society which then prevailed: first, by the anonymous character of the writings generally and, secondly, by the absence of the patriotic note. The individual, from the communistic standpoint, was but a unit of the nation; the nation, merely a section of a larger Christendom. The sense of individualism, and all that it implied, was yet to be emphasised by a later renascence. It is, therefore, clear that the anonymity of the romances, as in the case of the *Legendaries* and *Chronicle*, was, in part, the outcome of such conceptions and notions. The works represent

> The constant service of the antique wor...
> When service sweat for duty, not for meed.

And the absence of patriotism from the romances results from the same conditions: national consciousness was not yet really awakened. The mental horizon was bounded not by English shores, but by the limits of the Holy Roman Empire. Cœur de Lion's career alone appealed to latent sympathies; for the rest, the romance is untouched by national feeling. French and other material was adapted without any re-colouring.

The romance also reflects the medieval love of external beauty. The picturesqueness of the actual, of medieval streets and buildings, the bright colours in dress, the love of pageantry and pictorial effects, all helped to inspire, and are, indeed, reflected in, the gay colouring of the romances. If the stories, again, make considerable demands upon the credulity, it was not remarkable in regard to the character of the times. All things were possible in an age of faith: the wisdom of *credo quia impossibile* was to be questioned in the succeeding age of reason. Moreover, the atmosphere which nourished the romantic growth was that of feudalism, and an aristocratic note everywhere marks its tone and structure. But it is a glorified feudalism which is thus represented, a feudalism glorious in its hunting, its feasting and its fighting, in its brave men and fair women; the lower elements are scarcely ever remembered, and no pretence is made at holding up the mirror to the whole of society.

Lastly, like so much of the rest of medieval work, the romance moves largely amidst abstractions. It avoids close touch with the concrete: for instance, no reflection is found of the struggles of the Commons for parliamentary power, or even of the national strivings against papal dominion. The problems of actual life are carefully avoided; the material treated consists, rather, of the fanciful problems of the courts of love and situations arising out of the new-born chivalry.

The romance has many defects, in spite of all its attractions and the immense interest it arouses both intrinsically and historically. It sins in being intolerably long-winded and in being often devoid of all proportion. A story may drag wearily on, long after the last chapter has really been written, and insignificant episodes are treated with as much concern as those of pith and moment. Further, it makes demands upon the "painful" reader, not only by its discursiveness and love of digression, but also by the minuteness of its descriptions, relentlessly complete, which leave nothing to the imagination. "The art of the pen is to rouse the inward vision... because our flying minds cannot contain a protracted description." This truth was far from being appreciated in the age of the school-

men, with their encyclopaedic training. The aristocratic tone of the romance, moreover, tends to become wearisome by its very monotony. Sated with the sight of knights and ladies, giants and Saracens, one longs to meet an honest specimen of the citizen class; but such relief is never granted. To these and other shortcomings, however, the medieval eye was not always blind, though romances continued to be called for right up to the end of the fourteenth century and, indeed, after. Chaucer, with his keen insight and strong human sympathies, had shown himself aware of all these absurdities, for, in his *Sir Thopas,* designed as a parody on the romance in general, these are the points on which he seizes. When he rambles on for a hundred lines in *Sir Thopas* without saying much, he is quietly making the first point of his indictment. He is exaggerating the discursiveness and minuteness he has found so irksome. And, in the second place, he ridicules the aristocratic monotone by introducing a *bourgeois* note into his parodied romance. The knight swears an oath on plain "ale and bread": while, in the romantic forest through which he is wandering, lurk the harmless "buck and hare," as well as the homely nutmeg that flavours the ale. The lapse from romance is sufficiently evident and the work silently embodies much sound criticism. The host, with blunt remark, ends the parody, and in him may be seen a matter-of-fact intelligence declaiming against the faults of romance.

But, with all its shortcomings, the romance has a peculiar interest from the modern standpoint in that it marks the beginning of English fiction. In it is written the first chapter of the modern novel. After assuming a pastoral form in the days of Elizabeth, and after being reclaimed, with all its earlier defects, in the seventeenth century, romance slowly vanished in the dry light of the eighteenth century, but not before it had flooded the stage with astounding heroic plays. The later novels, however, continued the functions of the earlier romances when they embodied tales of adventures or tales of love whether thwarted or triumphant. Nor is Richardson's novel of analysis without its counterpart in this earlier creation. He treated love on psychological lines. But charming love-problems had exercised the minds of medieval courtiers and had subsequently been analysed in the romances after the approved fashion of the courts of love. It is only in the case of the later realistic novel that the origins have to be sought elsewhere—in the contemporary *fabliaux,* which dealt, in a ready manner, with the troubles and the humours of a lower stratum of life.

CHAPTER XV

PEARL, CLEANNESS, PATIENCE AND *SIR GAWAYNE*

AMONG the Cottonian manuscripts in the British Museum, a small quarto volume, numbered Nero A. x, contains the four Middle English poems known as *Pearl, Cleanness, Patience* and *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight.* The manuscript is in a hand which seems to belong to the end of the fourteenth or the early years of the fifteenth century; there are neither titles nor rubrics, but the chief divisions are marked by large initial letters of blue, flourished with red; several pictures, coarsely executed, illustrate the poems, each occupying a full page; the writing is "small, sharp and irregular." No single line of these poems has been discovered in any other manuscript.

The first of the four poems, *Pearl*, tells of a father's grief for a lost child, an infant daughter who had lived not two years on earth. In a vision he beholds his Pearl, no longer a little child, transfigured as a queen of heaven; from the other bank of a stream which divides them she instructs him, teaches him the lessons of faith and resignation and leads him to a glimpse of the new Jerusalem. He sees his "little queen" in the long procession of maidens; in his effort to plunge into the stream and reach her he awakes, to find himself stretched on the child's grave—

> Then woke I in that garden fair;
> My head upon that mound was laid,
> there where my Pearl had strayed below.
> I roused me, and felt in great dismay,
> and, sighing to myself, I said:—
> "Now all be to that Prince's pleasure"[1].

Naturally arising from the author's treatment of his subject, many a theological problem, notably the interpretation of the parable of the vineyard, is expounded. The student of medieval theology may find much of interest in *Pearl*, but the attempt to read the poem as a theological pamphlet, and a mere symbolical allegory, ignores its transcendent reality as a poet's lament. The

[1] The renderings into modern English, throughout the chapter, are from the writer's edition of *Pearl*, 1891.

personal side of the poem is clearly marked, though the author nowhere directly refers to his fatherhood. The basis of *Pearl* is to be found in that verse of the Gospel which tells of the man "that sought the precious margarites; and, when he had found one to his liking, he sold all his goods to buy that jewel." The pearl was doomed, by the law of nature, to flower and fade like a rose; thereafter it became a "pearl of price"; "the jeweller" indicates clearly enough the reality of his loss.

A fourteenth century poet, casting about for the form best suited for such a poem, had two courses before him: on the one hand, there was the great storehouse of dream-pictures, *The Romaunt of the Rose*; on the other hand, the symbolic pages of Scripture. A poet of the Chaucerian school would have chosen the former; to him the lost Marguerite would have suggested an allegory of "the flour that bereth our alder pris in figuringe," and the Marguerite would have been transfigured as the type of truest womanhood, a maiden in the train of love's queen, Alcestis. But the cult of the daisy seems to have been altogether unknown to our poet, or, at least, to have had no attraction for him. His Marguerite was, for him, the pearl of the Gospel; Mary, the queen of heaven, not Alcestis, queen of love, reigns in the visionary paradise which the poet pictures forth. While the main part of the poem is a paraphrase of the closing chapters of the Apocalypse and the parable of the vineyard, the poet's debt to *The Romaunt* is noteworthy, more particularly in the description of the wonderful land through which the dreamer wanders; and it can be traced here and there throughout the poem, in the personification of Pearl as Reason, in the form of the colloquy, in the details of dress and ornament, in many a characteristic word, phrase and reference; "the river from the throne," in the Apocalypse, here meets "the waters of the wells" devised by Sir Mirth for the garden of the Rose. From these two sources, *The Book of Revelation*, with its almost romantic glamour, and *The Romaunt of the Rose*, with its almost oriental allegory, are derived much of the wealth and brilliancy of the poem. The poet's fancy revels in the richness of the heavenly and the earthly paradise; but his fancy is subordinated to his earnestness and intensity.

The chief episodes of the poem are best indicated by the four illustrations in the manuscript.

In the first, the author is represented slumbering in a meadow, by the side of a beflowered mound, clad in a long red gown, with falling sleeves, turned up with white, and a blue hood attached

round the neck. Madden and others who have described the illustrations have not noticed that there are wings attached to the shoulders of the dreamer, and a cord reaching up into the foliage above, evidently intended to indicate that the spirit has "sped forth into space."

In the second, there is the same figure, drawn on a larger scale, but without the wings, standing by a river. He has now passed through the illumined forest-land:

> The hill-sides there were crowned
> with crystal cliffs full clear,
> and holts and woods, all bright with boles,
> blue as the blue of Inde,
> and trembling leaves, on every branch,
> as burnished silver shone—
> with shimmering sheen they glistened,
> touched by the gleam of the glades[1]:
>   and the gravel I ground upon that strand
>   was precious orient pearl.
>   The sun's own light had paled before
>   that sight so wondrous fair.

In the third picture, he is again represented in a similar position, with hands raised, and on the opposite side is Pearl, dressed in white, in the costume of Richard II's and Henry IV's time; her dress is buttoned tight up to the neck, and on her head is a crown.

In the fourth, the author is kneeling by the water, and, beyond the stream, is depicted the citadel, on the embattled walls of which Pearl again appears, with her arms extended towards him.

The metre of *Pearl* is a stanza of twelve lines with four accents, rimed according to the scheme *ababababbcbc*, and combining rime with alliteration; there are one hundred and one such verses; these divide again into twenty sections, each consisting of five stanzas with the same refrain—one section exceptionally contains six stanzas. Throughout the poem, the last or main word of the refrain is caught up in the first line of the next stanza. Finally, the last line of the poem is almost identical with the first, and rounds off the whole. The alliteration is not slavishly maintained, and the trisyllabic movement of the feet adds to the ease and music of the verse; in each line there is a well-defined caesura. Other writers before and after the author used this form of metre; but no extant specimen shows such mastery of the stanza, which, whatever may be its origin, has some kinship with the sonnet, though a less monumental form, the first eight lines resembling the sonnet's octave, the final quatrain the sonnet's sestet, and the

[1] patches of light

whole hundred and one stanzas of *Pearl* reminding one of a great sonnet-sequence. As the present writer has said elsewhere—

the refrain, the repetition of the catchword of each verse, the trammels of alliteration, all seem to have offered no difficulty to the poet; and, if power over technical difficulties constitutes in any way a poet's greatness, the author of *Pearl*, from this point of view alone, must take high rank among English poets. With a rich vocabulary at his command, consisting, on the one hand, of alliterative phrases and "native mother words," and, on the other hand, of the poetical phraseology of the great French classics of his time, he succeeded in producing a series of stanzas so simple in syntax, so varied in rhythmical effect, now lyrical, now epical, never undignified, as to leave the impression that no form of metre could have been more suitably chosen for this elegiac theme[1].

The diction of the poem has been considered faulty by reason of its copiousness; but the criticism does not appear to be just. It should be noted that the author has drawn alike from the English, Scandinavian and Romance elements of English speech.

The attention of scholars has recently been directed to Boccaccio's Latin eclogue *Olympia*, in which his young daughter, Violante, appears transfigured, much in the same way as Pearl in the English poem; and an ingenious attempt has been made to prove the direct debt of the English poet to his great Italian contemporary. The comparison of the two poems is a fascinating study, but there is no evidence of direct indebtedness; both writers, though their elegies are different in form, have drawn from the same sources. Even were it proved that such debt must actually be taken into account in dealing with the English poem, it would not help, but rather gainsay, the ill-founded theory that would make *Pearl* a pure allegory, a mere literary device, impersonal and unreal. The eclogue was written soon after the year 1358.

The second poem in the MS, *Cleanness*, relates, in epic style, three great subjects from scriptural history, so chosen as to enforce the lesson of purity. After a prologue, treating of the parable of the Marriage Feast, the author deals in characteristic manner with the Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the fall of Belshazzar. The poem is written in long lines, alliterative and rimeless, and is divided into thirteen sections of varying length, the whole consisting of 1812 lines.

The third poem is a metrical rendering of the story of Jonah, and its subject, too, as in the case of *Cleanness*, is indicated by its first word, *Patience*. Though, at first sight, the metre of the two poems seems to be identical throughout, it is to be noted that the

[1] Introduction to *Pearl* (1891).

lines of *Patience* divide into what may almost be described as stanzas of four lines; towards the end of the poem, there is a three-line group, either designed so by the poet or due to scribal omission. The same tendency towards the four-lined stanza is to be found in parts of *Cleanness*, more especially at the beginning and end of the poem. *Patience* consists of 531 lines; it is terser, more vivid and more highly finished, than the longer poem *Cleanness*. It is a masterly paraphrase of Scripture, bringing the story clearly and forcibly home to English folk of the fourteenth century. The author's delight in his subject is felt in every line. In *Cleanness*, especially characteristic of the author is the description of the holy vessels—the basins of gold, and the cups, arrayed like castles with battlements, with towers and lofty pinnacles, with branches and leaves portrayed upon them, the flowers being white pearl, and the fruit flaming gems. The two poems *Cleanness* and *Patience*, judged by the tests of vocabulary, richness of expression, rhythm, descriptive power, spirit and tone, delight in nature, more especially when agitated by storm and tempest, are manifestly by the same author as *Pearl*, to which poem, indeed, they may be regarded as pendants, dwelling more definitely on its two main themes—purity and submission to the Divine will. The link that binds *Cleanness* to *Pearl* is unmistakable. The pearl is there again taken as the type of purity:

How canst thou approach His court save thou be clean?
Through shrift thou may'st shine, though thou hast served shame;
thou may'st become pure through penance, till thou art a pearl.
The pearl is praised wherever gems are seen,
though it be not the dearest by way of merchandise.
Why is the pearl so prized, save for its purity,
that wins praise for it above all white stones?
It shineth so bright; it is so round of shape;
without fault or stain; if it be truly a pearl.
It becometh never the worse for wear,
be it ne'er so old, if it remain but whole.
If by chance 'tis uncared for and becometh dim,
left neglected in some lady's bower,
wash it worthily in wine, as its nature requireth:
it becometh e'en clearer than ever before.
So if a mortal be defiled ignobly,
yea, polluted in soul, let him seek shrift;
he may purify him by priest and by penance,
and grow brighter than beryl or clustering pearls.

If there were any doubt of identity of authorship in respect of the two poems, it would be readily dispelled by a comparison of the Deluge in *Cleanness* with the sea-storm in *Patience*.

Cleanness and *Patience* place their author among the older English epic poets. They show us more clearly than *Pearl* that the poet is a "backward link" to the distant days of Cynewulf; it is with the Old English epic poets that he must be compared, if the special properties of these poems are to be understood. But in one gift he is richer than his predecessors—the gift of humour. Earlier English literature cannot give us any such combination of didactic intensity and grim fancy as the poet displays at times in these small epics. One instance may be quoted, namely, the description of Jonah's abode in the whale:

As a mote in at a minster door, so mighty were its jaws,
Jonah enters by the gills, through slime and gore;
he reeled in through a gullet, that seemed to him a road,
tumbling about, aye head over heels,
till he staggers to a place as broad as a hall;
then he fixes his feet there and gropes all about,
and stands up in its belly, that stank as the devil;
in sorry plight there, 'mid grease that savoured as hell
his bower was arrayed, who would fain risk no ill.
Then he lurks there and seeks in each nook of the navel
the best sheltered spot, yet nowhere he finds
rest or recovery, but filthy mire
wherever he goes; but God is ever dear;
and he tarried at length and called to the Prince....
Then he reached a nook and held himself there,
where no foul filth encumbered him about.
He sat there as safe, save for darkness alone,
as in the boat's stern, where he had slept ere.
Thus, in the beast's bowel, he abides there alive,
three days and three nights, thinking aye on the Lord,
His might and His mercy and His measure eke;
now he knows Him in woe, who would not in weal.

A fourth poem follows *Cleanness* and *Patience* in the MS—the romance of *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight.* At a glance it is clear, as one turns the leaves, that the metre of the poem is a combination of the alliterative measure with the occasional introduction of a lyrical burden, introduced by a short verse of one accent, and riming according to the scheme *ababa,* which breaks the poem at irregular intervals, evidently marking various stages of the narrative. The metre blends the epic rhythm of *Cleanness* and *Patience* with the lyrical strain of the *Pearl.* The illustrations preceding this poem are obviously scenes from medieval romance; above one of the pictures, representing a stolen interview between a lady and a knight, is a couplet not found elsewhere in the MS:

Mi mind is mukel on on, that wil me noght amende:
Sum time was trewe as ston, and fro schame couthe her defende.

The romance deals with a weird adventure that befell Sir Gawain, son of Loth, and nephew of king Arthur, the favourite hero of medieval romance, more especially in the literature of the west and northern parts of England, where, in all probability, traditions of the knight lived on from early times; the depreciation of the hero in later English literature was due to the direct influence of one particular class of French romances. Gaston Paris, in Volume XXX of *L'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, 1888, has surveyed the whole field of medieval literature dealing with Sir Gawain; according to his view, the present romance is the jewel of English medieval literature, and it may, perhaps, be considered the jewel of medieval romance. To Madden belongs the honour of first having discovered the poem, and of having brought it out in his great collection, *Syr Gawayne...Ancient Romance poems by Scottish and English Authors relating to that celebrated Knight of the Round Table*, published by the Bannatyne Club, 1839. The place of *Sir Gawayne* in the history of English metrical romances is treated of elsewhere[1]; in the present chapter *Sir Gawayne* is considered mainly as the work of the author of *Pearl*.

The story tells how on a New Year's Day, when Arthur and his knights are feasting at Camelot, a great knight clad in green, mounted on a green horse, and carrying a Danish axe, enters the hall, and challenges one of Arthur's knights; the conditions being that the knight must take oath that, after striking the first blow, he will seek the Green Knight twelve months hence and receive a blow in return. Gawain is allowed to accept the challenge, takes the axe and smites the Green Knight so that the head rolls from the body; the trunk takes up the head, which the hand holds out while it repeats the challenge to Gawain to meet him at the Green Chapel next New Year's morning, and then departs. Gawain, in due course, journeys north, and wanders through wild districts, unable to find the Green Chapel; on Christmas Eve he reaches a castle, and asks to be allowed to stay there for the night: he is welcomed by the lord of the castle, who tells him that the Green Chapel is near, and invites him to remain for the Christmas feast. The lord, on each of the three last days of the year, goes a-hunting; Gawain is to stay behind with the lady of the castle; the lord makes the bargain that, on his return from hunting, each shall exchange what has been won during the day; the lady puts Gawain's honour to a severe test during the lord's absence: he receives a

[1] See Chapter XIII.

kiss from her; in accordance with the compact, he does not fail to give the kiss to the husband on his return; there is a similar episode on the next day when two kisses are received and given by Gawain; on the third day, in addition to three kisses, Gawain receives a green lace from the lady, which has the virtue of saving the wearer from harm. Mindful of his next day's encounter with the Green Knight, Gawain gives the three kisses to his host, but makes no mention of the lace. Next morning, he rides forth and comes to the Green Chapel, a cave in a wild district; the Green Knight appears with his axe; Gawain kneels; as the axe descends, Gawain flinches, and is twitted by the knight; the second time Gawain stands as still as a stone, and the Green Knight raises the axe, but pauses; the third time the knight strikes him, but, though the axe falls on Gawain's neck, his wound is only slight. Gawain now declares that he has stood one stroke for another, and that the compact is settled between them. Then the Green Knight reveals himself to Gawain as his host at the castle; he knows all that has taken place. "That woven lace which thou wearest mine own wife wove it; I know it well; I know, too, thy kisses, and thy trials, and the wooing of my wife; I wrought it myself. I sent her to tempt thee, and methinks thou art the most faultless hero that ever walked the earth. *As pearls are of more price than white peas, so is Gawain of more price than other gay knights.*" But for his concealing the magic lace he would have escaped unscathed. The name of the Green Knight is given as Bernlak de Hautdesert; the contriver of the test is Morgan le Fay, Arthur's half-sister, who wished to try the knights, and frighten Guinevere; Gawain returns to court and tells the story; and the lords and ladies of the Round Table lovingly agree to wear a bright green lace in token of this adventure, and in honour of Gawain, who disparages himself as cowardly and covetous. And ever more the badge was deemed the glory of the Round Table, and he that had it was held in honour.

The author derived his materials from some lost original; he states that the story had long been "locked in lettered lore." His original was, no doubt, in French or Anglo-French. The oldest form of the challenge and the beheading is an Old Irish heroic legend, *Fled Bricrend* (the feast of Bricriu), preserved in a MS of the end of the eleventh or the beginning of the twelfth century, where the story is told by Cuchulinn, the giant being Uath Mac Denomain, who dwelt near the lake. The Cuchulinn

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hazel and hawthorn hung clustering there,
with rough ragged moss o'ergrown all around;
unblithe, on bare twigs, sang many a bird,
piteously piping for pain of the cold.
Under them Gawayne on Gringolet glideth,
through marsh and through mire, a mortal full lonesome,
cumbered with care, lest ne'er he should come
to that Sire's service, who on that same night
was born of a bride to vanquish our bale.
Wherefore sighing he said: "I beseech Thee, O Lord,
and Mary, thou mildest mother so dear!
some homestead, where holily I may hear mass
and matins to-morrow, full meekly I ask;
thereto promptly I pray pater, ave,
and creed."
He rode on in his prayer,
And cried for each misdeed;
He crossed him ofttimes there,
And said: "Christ's cross me speed!"

But, much as *Sir Gawayne* shows us of the poet's delight in his art, the main purpose of the poem is didactic. Gawain, the knight of chastity, is but another study by the author of *Cleanness*. On the workmanship of his romance he has lavished all care, only that thereby his readers may the more readily grasp the spirit of the work. Sir Gawain may best, perhaps, be understood as the Sir Calidor of an earlier Spenser.

In the brief summary of the romance, one striking passage has been noted linking the poem to *Pearl*, namely, the comparison of Gawain to the pearl; but, even without this reference, the tests of language, technique and spirit, would render identity of authorship incontestable; the relation which this Spenserian romance bears to the elegy as regards time of composition cannot be definitely determined; but, judging by parallelism of expression, it is clear that the interval between the two poems must have been very short.

No direct statement has come down to us as to the authorship of these poems, and, in spite of various ably contested theories, it is not possible to assign the poems to any known poet. The nameless poet of *Pearl* and *Gawayne* has, however, left the impress of his personality on his work; and so vividly is this personality revealed in the poems that it is possible, with some degree of confidence, to evolve something approximating to an account of the author, by piecing together the references and other evidence to be found in his work. The following hypothetical biography is taken, with slight modification, from a study published elsewhere[1].

[1] Introduction to *Pearl*, p. xlvi.

The poet was born about 1330; his birthplace was somewhere in Lancashire, or, perhaps, a little more to the north, but not beyond the Tweed; such is the evidence of dialect. Additional testimony may be found in the descriptions of natural scenery in *Gawayne*, *Cleanness* and *Patience*. The wild solitudes of the Cumbrian coast, near his native home, seem to have had special attraction for him. Like a later and greater poet, he must, while yet a youth, have felt the subtle spell of nature's varying aspects in the scenes around him.

Concerning the condition of life to which the boy belonged we know nothing definite; but it may be inferred that his father was connected, probably in some official capacity, with a family of high rank, and that it was amid the gay scenes that brightened life in a great castle that the poet's earlier years were passed. In later life, he loved to picture this home with its battlements and towers, its stately hall and spacious parks. There, too, perhaps, minstrels' tales of chivalry first revealed to him the weird world of medieval romance and made him yearn to gain for himself a worthy place among contemporary English poets.

The Old English poets were his masters in poetic art; he had also read *The Romaunt of the Rose*, the chief products of early French literature, Vergil and other Latin writers; to "Clopyngel's *clean* rose" he makes direct reference. The intensely religious spirit of the poems, together with the knowledge they everywhere display of Holy Writ and theology, lead one to infer that he was, at first, destined for the service of the church; probably, he became a "clerk," studying sacred and profane literature at a monastic school, or at one of the universities; and he may have received the first tonsure only.

The four poems preserved in the Cottonian MS seem to belong to a critical period of the poet's life. *Gawayne*, possibly the earliest of the four, written, perhaps, in honour of the patron to whose household the poet was attached, is remarkable for the evidence it contains of the writer's minute knowledge of the higher social life of his time; from his evident enthusiasm it is clear that he wrote from personal experience of the pleasures of the chase, and that he was accustomed to the courtly life described by him.

The romance of *Gawayne* contains what seems to be a personal reference where the knight is made to exclaim: "It is no marvel for a man to come to sorrow through a woman's wiles; so was Adam beguiled, and Solomon, and Samson, and David, and many

more. It were, indeed, great bliss for a man to love them well, and love them not—if one but could."

Gawayne is the story of a noble knight triumphing over the sore temptations that beset his vows of chastity: evidently in a musing mood he wrote in the blank space at the head of one of the illustrations in his MS the suggestive couplet still preserved by the copyist in the extant MS. His love for some woman had brought him one happiness—an only child, a daughter, on whom he lavished all the wealth of his love. He named the child Margery or Marguerite; she was his "Pearl"—his emblem of holiness and innocence; perhaps she was a love-child, hence his *privy* pearl. His happiness was short-lived; before two years had passed, the child was lost to him; his grief found expression in verse; a heavenly vision of his lost jewel brought him comfort and taught him resignation. It is noteworthy that, throughout the whole poem, there is no single reference to the mother of the child; the first words when the father beholds his transfigured Pearl are significant:

"O Pearl," quoth I,
"Art thou my Pearl that I have plained,
Regretted by me alone" ["bi myn one"].

With the loss of his Pearl, a blight seems to have fallen on the poet's life, and poetry seems gradually to have lost its charm for him. The minstrel of *Gawayne* became the stern moralist of *Cleanness* and *Patience*. Other troubles, too, seem to have befallen him during the years that intervened between the writing of these companion poems. *Patience* appears to be almost as autobiographical as *Pearl*; the poet is evidently preaching to himself the lesson of fortitude and hope, amid misery, pain and poverty. Even the means of subsistence seem to have been denied him. "Poverty and patience," he exclaims, "are need's playfellows."

Cleanness and *Patience* were written probably some few years after *Pearl*; and the numerous references in these two poems to the sea would lead one to infer that the poet may have sought distraction in travel, and may have weathered the fierce tempests he describes. His wanderings may have brought him even to the holy city whose heavenly prototype he discerned in the visionary scenes of *Pearl*.

We take leave of the poet while he is still in the prime of life; we have no material on which to base even a conjecture as to his future. Perhaps he turned from poetry and gave himself

entirely to theology, always with him a favourite study, or to philosophy, at that time closely linked with the vital questions at issue concerning faith and belief. If the poet took any part in the church controversies then beginning to trouble men's minds, his attitude would have been in the main conservative. Full of intense hatred towards all forms of vice, especially immorality, he would have spoken out boldly against ignoble priests and friars, and all such servants of the church who, preaching righteousness, lived unrighteously. From minor traditional patristic views he seems to have broken away, but there is no indication of want of allegiance on his part to the authority of the church, to papal supremacy and to the doctrine of Rome; though it has been well said recently, with reference to his general religious attitude, that it was evangelical rather than ecclesiastical.

It is, indeed, remarkable that no tradition has been handed down concerning the authorship of these poems; and many attempts have been made to identify the author with one or other of the known writers belonging to the end of the fourteenth century. Perhaps the most attractive of these theories is that which would associate the poems with Ralph Strode, Chaucer's "philosophical Strode," to whom (together with "the moral Gower") was dedicated *Troilus and Criseyde*. According to a Latin entry in the old catalogue of Merton College, drawn up in the early years of the fifteenth century, Strode is described as "a noble poet and author of an elegiac work *Phantasma Radulphi*." Ralph Strode of Merton is certainly to be identified with the famous philosopher of the name, one of the chief logicians of the age. It is as poet and philosopher that he seems to be singled out by Chaucer. *Phantasma Radulphi* might, possibly, apply to *Pearl*; while *Gawayne and the Grene Knight* might well be placed in juxtaposition to *Troilus*. An *Itinerary of the Holy Land*, by Strode, appears to have been known to Nicholas Brigham; further, there is a tradition that he left his native land, journeyed to France, Germany and Italy, and visited Syria and the Holy Land. His name as a Fellow of Merton is said to occur for the last time in 1361. Strode and Wyclif were contemporaries at Oxford, as may be inferred from an unprinted MS in the Imperial library in Vienna, containing Wyclif's reply to Strode's arguments against certain of the reformer's views. The present writer is of opinion that the philosopher is identical with the common serjeant of the city

of London of the same name, who held office between 1375 and 1385, and who died in 1387. But, fascinating as is the theory, no link has, as yet, been discovered which may incontestably connect Strode with the author of *Pearl*, nor has it yet been discovered that Strode came of a family belonging to the west midland or northern district. The fiction that Strode was a monk of Dryburgh abbey has now been exploded.

Some seventy years ago, Guest, the historian of English rhythms, set up a claim for the poet Huchoun of the Awle Ryale, to whom Andrew of Wyntoun refers in his *Orygynale Cronykil*[1].

Guest regarded as the most decisive proof of his theory the fact that, at the void space at the head of *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight* in the MS, a hand of the fifteenth century has scribbled the name *Hugo de*; but little can be inferred from this piece of evidence; while the lines by Wyntoun tend to connect the author with a set of poems differentiated linguistically and in technique from the poems in the Cotton MS. But this is not the place to enter into a discussion of the various problems connected with the identity of Huchoun: it is only necessary here to state that, in the opinion of the writer, the view which would make Huchoun the author of *Pearl*, *Gawayne and the Grene Knight*, *Cleanness* and *Patience* is against the weight of evidence. By the same evidence as that adduced to establish Huchoun's authorship of these poems, various other alliterative poems are similarly assigned to him, namely, *The Wars of Alexander*, *The Destruction of Troy*, *Titus and Vespasian*, *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*, *Wynnere and Wastoure*, *Erkenwald* and the alliterative riming poem *Golagros and Gawane*.

According to this view, *The Parlement of the Thre Ages* belongs to the close of the poet's career, for it is supposed to sum up his past course through all his themes—through *Alexander*, *Troy*, *Titus* and *Morte Arthure*. But this theory, that, on the basis of parallel passages, would make Huchoun the official father of all these poems, in addition to those which may be legitimately assigned to him on the evidence of Wyntoun's lines, fails to recognise that the author of *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*, far from being saturated with the *Troy Book* and the *Alexander* romances, actually confuses Jason, or Joshua, the high priest who welcomed Alexander, with Jason who won the golden fleece.

[1] See the Chapter on Huchoun in Volume II

Probably the work of four or five alliterative poets comes under consideration in dealing with the problem at issue. To one poet may, perhaps, safely be assigned the two poems *The Parlement of the Thre Ages* and *Wynnere and Wastoure*, the latter from internal evidence one of the oldest poems of the fourteenth century, and to be dated about 1351: it is a precursor of *The Vision of Piers Plowman*[1]. The former poem recalls the poet of *Gawayne*, more especially in its elaborate description of deer-stalking, a parallel picture to the description of the hunting of the deer, the boar and the fox, in *Gawayne*.

The alliterative poem of *Erkenwald* comes nearer to the work of the author of *Cleanness* and *Patience* than any other of the alliterative poems grouped in the above-mentioned list. It tells, in lines written either by this author himself or by a very gifted disciple, an episode of the history of the saint when he was bishop of St Paul's; and, in connection with the date of its composition, it should be noted that a festival in honour of the saint was established in London in the year 1386.

Internal evidence of style, metre and language, appears to outweigh the parallel passages and other clues which are adduced as tests of unity of authorship in respect of the *Troy Book*, *Titus*, *The Wars of Alexander* and *Golagros*. For the present, these may be considered as isolated remains which have come down to us of the works of a school of alliterative poets who flourished during the second half of the fourteenth and the early years of the fifteenth century. So far as we can judge from these extant poems, the most gifted poet of the school was the author of *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight*: he may well have been regarded as the master, and his influence on more northern poets, and on alliterative poetry generally, may explain in part, but not wholly, the parallel passages which link his work with that of other poets of the school, who used the same formulae, the same phrases and, at times, repeated whole lines, much in the same way as poets of the Chaucerian school spoke the language of their master.

[1] See Chapter I, Volume II, *Piers the Plowman*, p. 87.

CHAPTER XVI

LATER TRANSITION ENGLISH

I

Legendaries and Chroniclers

It is significant, both of the approaching triumph of the vernacular, and of the growing importance of the lower and middle classes in the nation, that some of the chief contributions to our literature during the two generations immediately preceding that of Chaucer were translations from Latin and Norman-French, made, as their authors point out, expressly for the delectation of the common people. Not less significant are the facts that much of this literature deals with the history of the nation, and that now, for the first time since the Conquest, men seemed to think it worth while to commit to writing political ballads in the English tongue.

The productions of this time, dealt with in the present chapter, fall into two main classes, religious and historical, the former comprising homilies, saints' lives and translations or paraphrases of Scripture, and the latter the chronicles of Robert of Gloucester, Thomas Bek of Castleford and Robert Mannyng, the prophecies of Adam Davy and the war songs of Laurence Minot. The two classes have many characteristics in common, and, while the homilists delight in illustrations drawn from the busy life around them, the historians seldom lose an opportunity for conveying a moral lesson.

The earliest of the three chronicles mentioned above was written about 1300, and is generally known by the name of Robert of Gloucester, though it is very uncertain whether he was the original author of the whole work. It exists in two versions, which, with the exception of several interpolations in one of them, are identical down to the year 1135. From this point the story is told in one version, which may be called the first recension, in nearly three thousand lines, and in the other, the second recension, in rather less than six hundred.

From an investigation of the style it has been supposed that there was a single original for lines 1—9137 of the *Chronicle*, that is to say, to the end of the reign of Henry I, composed in the abbey of Gloucester, and that, at the end of the thirteenth century, a monk, whose name we know from internal evidence to have been Robert, added to it the longer continuation. This must have been made after 1297, as it contains a reference to the canonisation of Louis IX of France, which took place in that year. Then, in the first half of the fourteenth century, another writer found the original manuscript, added the shorter continuation, and also interpolated and worked over the earlier part.

In any case, there can be little doubt that the *Chronicle* was composed in the abbey of Gloucester. The language is that of south Gloucestershire; and Stow, who may have had access to information now lost, speaks in his *Annals* (1580) of the author as Robert of Gloucester, or Robertus Glocestrensis. The detailed acquaintance with local affairs shown by the writer of the longer continuation proves that he lived near the city, while we have his own authority for the fact that he was within thirty miles of Evesham at the time of the battle ably described by him. But, in the earlier part of the *Chronicle*, also, there are traces of special local knowledge, which, apart from the dialect, would point to Gloucester as the place of its origin.

The poem begins with a geographical account of England, borrowed from Geoffrey of Monmouth, Henry of Huntingdon and the life of St Kenelm in the *South English Legendary*.

Next, Nennius, or, perhaps, Geoffrey of Monmouth, is followed for the genealogy of Brutus, the legendary founder of Britain; and, from this point down to the English conquest, Geoffrey of Monmouth is the chief authority. The compiler is, however, by no means a slavish translator, and he treats his original with considerable freedom. Thus, he sometimes elaborates, giving the speeches of historical personages in a fuller form, while, on the other hand, he frequently omits long passages. But the episodes which stand out in the memory of the reader—the stories of Lear, of the "virgin-daughter of Locrine" and of Arthur, are also those which arrest us in the Latin original.

Although it has sometimes been stated that the author of this part of the *Chronicle* was indebted to Wace, it seems very doubtful whether the work of his predecessor was known to him. Such lines as those which hint at the high place taken by Gawain among Arthur's knights, or make mention of the Round Table,

may be due to verbal tradition, which was especially rife in the Welsh marches. The coincidences are certainly not striking enough to justify the assertion that the Gloucester *Chronicle* owed anything to the *Geste des Bretons*, though W. Aldis Wright has shown that the writer of the second recension was acquainted with Layamon's version of Wace's poems.

For the history of England under the Old English and Norman kings, the chief authorities consulted were Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury, the former being followed in the narration of events, and the latter in the descriptions and anecdotes of famous characters. Occasionally, other sources are drawn upon; for instance, the story of the duel between Canute and Edmund Ironside is from the *Genealogia Regum Anglorum* of Ailred of Rievaulx, and another work by the same author, the *Vita Edwardi Regis et Martyris* is, probably, the chief authority for the life and death of Edward the Confessor. For the reigns of Henry II and Richard I the life of Thomas à Becket in the *South English Legendary* and the *Annales Waverlienses* supplied some material, the former furnishing almost word for word the accounts of the constitutions of Clarendon and of the death of the saint. Some passages seem to depend on folk-songs; and there are others, such as the account of the misfortunes which befell the duke of Austria's land in revenge for his imprisonment of Richard I, that may be due to tradition. On the whole, however, the *Chronicle* does not supply much that is fresh in the way of legendary lore.

From the beginning of the reign of Henry III the poem becomes valuable both as history and literature. The writer, whom we may now certainly call Robert, was, as we have seen, either an eye-witness of the facts he relates, or had heard of them from eye-witnesses. He had, moreover, a distinct narrative gift, and there are all the elements of a stirring historical romance in his story of the struggle that took place between the king and the barons for the possession of Gloucester. Not less graphic is the description of the town and gown riot in Oxford in 1263. We are told how the burgesses shut one of the city gates; how certain clerks hewed it down and carried it through the suburbs, singing over it a funeral hymn; how, for this offence, the rioters were put in prison; and how the quarrel grew to such a height that the citizens came out armed against the scholars. Robert relates with evident enjoyment the discomfiture of the former, and the vengeance taken by the clerks on their foes—how they

plundered their shops, burned their houses and punished the mayor, who was a vintner, by taking the bungs from his casks, and letting the wine run away. But, he adds, when the king came and heard of all this mischief, he drove the clerks out of the town, and forbade their returning till after Michaelmas.

Picturesque as such passages are, they are less valuable than the powerful description of the battle of Evesham and the death of Simon de Montfort, a passage too well known to call for further reference.

The form of this *Chronicle* is no less interesting than its theme. Its metre is an adaptation of the two half-lines of Old English poetry into one long line, one of its nearest relations being *Poema Morale*. In spite of the well-marked caesura, a relic of the former division into halves, the line has a swinging rhythm especially suited to narrative verse and the poem is of metrical importance as showing the work of development in progress[1].

It was not long after Robert had added his continuation to the Gloucester *Chronicle* that Thomas Bek of Castleford composed a similar work in the northern dialect. The unique MS of this chronicle is preserved at Göttingen, and is as yet inedited. The work contains altogether nearly forty thousand lines, of which the first twenty-seven thousand are borrowed from Geoffrey of Monmouth, while the remainder, extending to the coronation of Edward III, are derived from sources not yet defined. The metre is the short rimed couplet of the French chroniclers.

Mention has already been made of the *South English Legendary*, a collection of versified lives of the saints in the same dialect and metre as those of the Gloucester *Chronicle*. The fact that certain passages from these lives are incorporated in the *Chronicle* has led to the conclusion that one person was responsible for both; but, as we have seen, the *Chronicle* is probably the work of three hands, if not of more, and it is impossible to say anything more definite about the authorship of the *Legendary* than that it had its origin in the neighbourhood of Gloucester towards the end of the thirteenth century, and that more than one author was concerned in it. The oldest manuscript (Laud 108 in the Bodleian) was written after 1265, and is dated by its editor, Horstmann, as belonging to the years 1280—90.

It is probable, however, that it had been in hand a considerable time. As the number of saints' days increased, it was found convenient to have at hand homiletic material for each festival;

[1] See Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody*, i, 67.

and, as no single monastic library would contain manuscripts of all the independent lives required, these had to be borrowed and copied as occasion served. This was a task too great for any one man, and it is most probable that the monks at Gloucester had been gathering the legends together for some years, and that a number of them contributed towards the first redaction. This would partly account for the unequal merit of the lives, some of which display much more literary and poetic feeling than others. But, in considering this point, it must be remembered that the charm of any particular story depends largely on its original source; even the clumsy pen of a monkish translator could not wholly disguise the beauty of such legends as that of St Francis.

Although the collection is of the most varied description, and comprises the lives of saints of all countries and of all ages down to the time of compilation, the best-told legends are those of native saints; and, as the style of these is not unlike that of the author of the longer continuation of the Gloucester *Chronicle*, it is possible that they may be by him. Among them may be especially mentioned the very vivid account of the career and murder of St Thomas of Canterbury, which displays considerable dramatic power, and the life of St Edmund of Pontigny (archbishop Edmund Rich, who died in 1240), which treats of events that were still fresh in men's minds and, like the Gloucester *Chronicle*, betrays a great admiration for Simon de Montfort. The same predilection, it may be noted, is evident in the life of St Dominic, where Sir Simon, "that good and gracious knight," is commended for having lent his support to the order of preaching friars.

Some of the lives, such as those of St Kenelm and St Michael, are made the vehicle of secular instruction, and contain curious geographical and scientific disquisitions, the latter being especially valuable for its light upon medieval folk- and devil-lore and for its cosmology. The most interesting of all the lives are those connected with St Patrick and St Brendan. The story of Sir Owayn's visit to purgatory shows all the characteristic Celtic wealth of imagination in the description of the torments endured. Nothing could be more terrible than the lines which describe him as "dragged all about in a waste land, so black and dark that he saw nothing but the fiends, who drove him hither and thither and thronged around him." And, on the other hand, nothing could be more charming in its strange mystic beauty than the story of St Brendan's sojourn in the Isle of Birds, and his interview with the

penitent Judas, permitted, in recompense of one charitable deed, to enjoy a little respite from the pains of hell.

While the monks of Gloucester were thus busy with hagiology, similar activity was exhibited in the north of England, according to Horstmann in the diocese of Durham, though the prevalence of midland forms in the texts points to a district further south. There exists in many manuscripts, the earliest of which, in the Royal College of Physicians at Edinburgh, seems to have been written at the beginning of the fourteenth century, a cycle of homilies, in octosyllabic couplets, covering the whole of the Sundays in the church year. Two of the later manuscripts (Harleian 4196 and Tiberius E. VII), both written about 1350, contain also a cycle of legends for use on saints' days.

Considerable diversity is shown in the recensions of the homilies; the Edinburgh MS opens with a prologue, in which the author, like many writers of the time, carefully explains that his work is intended for ignorant men, who cannot understand French; and, since it is the custom of the common people to come to church on Sundays, he has turned into English for them the Gospel for the day. His version, however, is not a close translation; it resembles *Ormulum* in giving first a paraphrase of the Scripture, and then an exposition of the passage chosen; but, in addition to this, there is also a *narracio*, or story, to illustrate the lesson and drive the moral home. These stories are often quite short, sometimes mere anecdotes, and are derived from the most diverse sources: sometimes from saints' lives, sometimes from Scripture and sometimes from French *fabliaux*. The homilist is an especial lover of the poor, and one of his most striking sermons is that for the fourth Sunday after Epiphany, on the subject of Christ stilling the waves. The world, says he, is but a sea, tossed up and down, where the great fishes eat the small; for the rich men of the world devour what the poor earn by their labour, and the king acts towards the weak as the whale towards the herring. Like Mannyng of Brunne, the writer has a special word of condemnation for usurers.

The Harleian manuscript is, unfortunately, imperfect at the beginning, so that it is impossible to say whether it ever contained the prologue; while the MS Tiberius E. VII was so badly burned in the Cottonian fire that the greater part of it cannot be deciphered. These manuscripts, however, show that the homilies had been entirely worked over and rewritten in the half century that had elapsed since the Edinburgh version was composed.

The plan of paraphrase, exposition and narration is not always followed, and, so far as Easter Sunday, the stories are taken chiefly from Scripture. From this point, however, they depend on other sources, and they are especially interesting when compared with the contents of other northern poems of the same period. The legend of the Holy Rood, for instance, which runs like a thread through *Cursor Mundi*, is given at great length, and so, also, is the graphic story of Piers the usurer, which occurs in *Handlyng Synne*. Among the stories is the well-known legend of the monk who was lured by a bird from his monastery, and only returned to it after three hundred years, when everything was changed, and no one knew him.

The legends which follow these homilies are much more restricted in scope than those of the southern collection, and are confined chiefly to lives of the apostles or of the early Christian martyrs, St Thomas of Canterbury being the only English saint represented. But, while the Gloucester *Legendary* seems to have been intended only as a reference book for the preacher, the northern series shows the lives in a finished form, suitable for reading or reciting in church. The verse is polished, limpid and fluent, betraying, in its graceful movement, traces of French influence, while, at the same time, it is not free from the tendency to alliteration prevalent in northern poetry. The writer had a genuine gift of narration, and possessed both humour and dramatic power, as is shown by the story of the lord and lady who were parted by shipwreck and restored to one another by the favour of St Mary Magdalene; and, like most medieval homilists, he excels in the description of horrors—of fiends "blacker than any coal," and of dragons armed with scales as stiff as steel. Sometimes, a little homily is interwoven with the story; and one passage, which rebukes men for slumbering or chattering in church, resembles a similar exhortation in *Handlyng Synne*. The section on the "faithful dead," also, seems to be in close dependence on that work. Three of the stories told occur in close juxtaposition in Mannyng's book; and a reference to the story of Piers the usurer, which is mentioned but not related, probably because it had already found a place in the homilies, points to the conclusion that the compiler was well acquainted with the work of his predecessor.

The desire to impart a knowledge of the Scriptures to men who could understand only the vernacular likewise prompted the author of the *Northern Psalter*, a translation of the *Psalms* in

vigorous, if somewhat rough, octosyllabic couplets, composed about the middle of the reign of Edward II. One of the three manuscripts in which it exists belonged to the monastery of Kirkham, but the language is that of a more northerly district, and the author probably lived near the Scottish border.

Further evidence of literary activity in the north of England during this period is given by *Cursor Mundi*, a very long poem, which, as its name implies, treats of universal rather than local history, and, like the cycles of miracle plays which were just beginning to pass out of the hands of their clerical inventors into those of laymen, relates the story of the world from the creation to the day of doom. It opens with a prologue, which is, practically, the author's "apology" for his undertaking. Men, he says, rejoice to hear romances of Alexander and Julius Caesar, of the long strife between Greece and Troy, of king Arthur and Charlemagne. Each man is attracted by what he enjoys the most, and all men delight especially in their "paramours"; but the best lady of all is the Virgin Mary, and whosoever takes her for his own shall find that her love is ever true and loyal. Therefore, the poet will compose a work in her honour; and, because French rimes are commonly found everywhere, but there is nothing for those who know only English, he will write it for him who "na Frenche can."

With this explanation the author embarks on his vast theme, which he divides according to the seven ages of the world, a device copied from Bede. He describes the creation, the war in heaven, the temptation of Eve, the expulsion from Paradise, the history of the patriarchs and so on through the Bible narrative, sometimes abridging, but more often enlarging, the story by long additions, drawn from the most diverse authorities, which add greatly to the interest of the narrative. One of the most interesting of these additions is the legend of the Holy Rood: this is not told in a complete form in one place, but is introduced in relation to the history of the men who were connected with it. In place of the prophecies there are inserted two parables, probably from Grosseteste's *Château d'Amour*; and the poet then goes on to tell with much detail of the youth of Mary, the birth of Christ and His childhood. Then follow the story of His life as given by the evangelists, His death and descent into hell, the careers of the apostles, the assumption of the Virgin and a section on doomsday. The author concludes with an address to his fellow-men, begging them to think upon the transitory

nature of earthly joys, and a prayer to the Virgin, commending his work to her approval.

The humility betrayed in the concluding lines is all the more attractive because, as his poem shows, the writer was an accomplished scholar, extremely well read in medieval literature. His work, indeed, is a storehouse of legends, not all of which have been traced to their original sources. His most important authority was the *Historia Scholastica* of Peter Comestor; but he used many others, among which may be mentioned Wace's *Fête de la Conception Notre Dame*, Grosseteste's *Château d'Amour*, the apocryphal gospels, a south English poem on the assumption of the Virgin ascribed to Edmund Rich, Adso's *Libellus de Antichristo*, the *Elucidarium* of Honorius of Autun, Isidore of Seville and the *Golden Legend* of Jacobus a Voragine.

The popularity of *Cursor Mundi* is witnessed by the large number of manuscripts in which it is preserved, and it has many qualities to account for this. In the first place, the author never loses sight of his audience, showing great skill in appealing to the needs of rude, unlettered people whose religious instruction must, necessarily, be conveyed by way of concrete example. He has a keen eye for the picturesque; his description of the Flood, for instance, may be compared with the famous passage in the alliterative poem, *Cleanness*, and he lingers over the episode of Goliath with an enjoyment due as much to his own delight in story-telling as to a knowledge of what his hearers will appreciate; there is a strong family likeness between the Philistine hero and such monsters as Colbrand and Ascapart. The strong humanity which runs through the whole book is one of its most attractive features, and shows that the writer was full of sympathy for his fellow creatures.

The whole poem shows considerable artistic skill. In spite of the immense mass of material with which it deals, it is well proportioned, and the narrative is lucid and easy. The verse form is generally that of the eight-syllabled couplet; but, when treating of the passion and death of Christ, the poet uses alternately riming lines of eight and six syllables; and the discourse between Christ and man, which follows the account of the crucifixion, consists largely of six-lined mono-rimed stanzas.

Of the author, beyond the fact that he was, as he himself states, a cleric, nothing whatever is known. Hupe's theory, that his name was John of Lindebergh, which place he identifies with Limber Magna in Lincolnshire, is based on a misreading of

an insertion in one of the manuscripts by the scribe who copied it; and all that can be affirmed with any confidence is that the author lived in the north of England towards the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century. Some of the later manuscripts show west midland and even southern peculiarities, but this is only another testimony to the wide-spread popularity of the poem.

The most skilful story-teller of his time was Robert Mannyng of Brunne, who, between 1303 and 1338, translated into his native tongue two poems written in poor French by English clerics. These two works were William of Wadington's *Manuel des Pechiez*, written, probably, for Norman settlers in Yorkshire, and a chronicle composed by Peter of Langtoft, a canon of the Augustinian priory of Bridlington.

Unlike most monastic writers, Mannyng supplies some valuable information about himself. In the prologue to *Handlyng Synne*, his version of the *Manuel des Pechiez*, he tells us that his name is Robert of Brunne, of Brunnëwake in Kestevene, and that he dedicates his work especially to the fellowship of Sempringham, to which he had belonged for fifteen years. He also tells us the exact year in which he began his translation—1303. This information is supplemented by some lines in his translation of Langtoft's chronicle. Here he adds that his name is Robert Mannyng of Brunne, and that he wrote all this history in the reign of Edward III, in the priory of Sixille. We gather, also, from an allusion in the narrative, that he had spent some time at Cambridge, where he had met Robert Bruce and his brother Alexander, who was a skilful artist.

These particulars have been elucidated by the labours of Furnivall. Brunne was the present Bourne, a market town thirty-five miles to the south of Boston, in Lincolnshire; Sempringham, where was the parent house of the Gilbertine order, is now represented by a church and a few scattered houses; Sixille, or Six Hills, is a little hamlet not far from Market Rasen, and here, too, was a priory of the Gilbertines.

Of William of Wadington, the author of the *Manuel des Pechiez* very little is known. In the prologue to his work, however, he begs his readers to excuse his bad French, because he was born and bred in England and took his name from a town in that country. The apology is not altogether superfluous, for his grammar is loose, and forms that were archaic even in the

thirteenth century are of frequent occurrence. His versification is also poor, and, though his normal form is the octosyllabic couplet, he does not hesitate to introduce lines of six, or even of ten, syllables. His English audience, however, was not critical, and the popularity of the manual is attested by the number of manuscripts, fourteen in all, which have survived. Most of these belong to the thirteenth century, and Mannyng's translation, as we have seen, was begun in 1303.

The English version begins with an introduction of the usual style, setting out the plan of the work, and stating the object of the author in making the translation. He has put it into English rime for the benefit of ignorant men, who delight in listening to stories at all hours, and often hearken to evil tales which may lead to their perdition. Therefore, he has provided them in this book with stories of a more edifying description.

His instinct for selecting what he feels will interest the unlearned is at once revealed by his omission of the long and dull section in which Wadington dwells on the twelve articles of faith. Theory attracts him little, and he proceeds at once to the first commandment, illustrating it by the dreadful example of a monk, who, by his love for an Eastern woman, was tempted to the worship of idols. Then comes a notable passage, also in Wadington, against witchcraft, and, in expansion of this, is given the original story of how a witch enchanted a leather bag, so that it milked her neighbour's cows, and how her charm, in the mouth of a bishop (who, of course, did not believe in it) was useless. Thus he treats of the ten commandments in order, keeping fairly closely to his original, and generally following Wadington's lead in the stories by which he illustrates them. This occupies nearly three thousand lines, and the poet then enters upon the theme of the seven deadly sins.

Mannyng seems to have found this a congenial subject, and the section throws much light on the social conditions of his time. Tournaments, he says, are the occasion of all the seven deadly sins, and, if every knight loved his brother, they would never take place, for they encourage pride, envy, anger, idleness, covetousness, gluttony and lust. Furthermore, mystery plays—and these lines are highly significant as throwing light on the development of the drama at the beginning of the fourteenth century—are also occasions of sin. Only two mysteries may be performed, those of the birth of Christ and of His resurrection, and these must be played within the church, for the moral edification of the people. If they are presented in groves or highways, they are

sinful pomps, to be avoided as much as tournaments; and priests who lend vestments to aid the performance are guilty of sacrilege.

One of the best stories in the book, the tale of Piers, illustrates the wickedness and repentance of one of the hated tribe of usurers. It is also in illustration of this sin that the grotesque story occurs of the Cambridge miser parson who was so much attached to his gold that he tried to eat it, and died in the attempt.

In respect of the sin of gluttony, not only the rich are to be blamed; most people sin by eating too much; two meals a day are quite sufficient, except for children, and they should be fed only at regular hours. Late suppers, too, are to be avoided, especially by serving men, who often sit up and feast till cock-crow. People should not break their fast before partaking of the "holy bread," or dine before they hear mass.

The seven deadly sins being disposed of, there follows a long section on sacrilege, in which Mannyng departs freely from his original. He says, indeed, that he will deal with some vices coming under this head as William of Wadington teaches him; but the lines following, in which he apologises for "foul English and feeble rhyme," seem to show that he was conscious of some audacity in taking many liberties with the French poem. However this may be, the account of the reproof that a Norfolk bondsman gave a knight who had allowed his beasts to defile the churchyard, which is not in the *Manuel des Pechiez,* and is, evidently, a true story, is very characteristic of the attitude of the Gilbertines to the privileged classes. The order was, as its latest historian has pointed out, essentially democratic in its organisation, and the fearlessness of monk towards prior is reflected in the approval that Mannyng tacitly bestows on the thrall's behaviour.

The churchyard was not only desecrated by use as a pasture. It was the meeting-place of youths and maidens for games and songs, and this gives occasion for the grim legend, borrowed from a German source, of the dancers and carol singers who, on Christmas night, disturbed the priest in his orisons. Notwithstanding the fact that his own daughter was tempted to join the frivolous company, he punished them with his curse; so that the intruders were doomed to pursue their dance through rain and snow and tempest for ever. There is something very charming in the snatch of song—

By the leved wood rode Bevolyne,
Wyth him he ledd feyrë Merswyne,
Why stondë we? Why go we noght?

and very grim is the irony that dooms the dancers to repeat the last line in the midst of their involuntary perpetual motion. These qualities are, of course, inherent in the story, but it loses nothing in Mannyng's narration.

The discussion of the sin of sacrilege brings the author to line 9492, and now, following Wadington, he enters on the explanation of the seven sacraments. But, as the French version supplies few stories in illustration of these, Mannyng makes up the deficiency by several of his own. Then follows a passage on the necessity of shrift, the twelve points of shrift and the graces which spring from it, all treated with comparative brevity and with little anecdotal illustration.

It is impossible for any short account of *Handlyng Synne* to convey an adequate idea of its charm and interest. Mannyng excels in all the qualities of a narrator. He combines, in fact, the *trouvère* with the homilist, and shows the way to Gower's *Confessio Amantis.* Thus, he differs from the antiquary Robert of Gloucester by being one of the earliest of English story-tellers. He had a vivid imagination which enabled him to see all the circumstances and details of occurrences for which his authority merely provides the suggestion, and he fills in the outlines of stories derived from Gregory or Bede with colours borrowed from the homely life of England in the fourteenth century. He delights, also, to play upon the emotions of his audience by describing the torments of the damned, and his pictures of hell are more grim and more grotesque than those of Wadington. He shows a preference for direct narration, and, where the French merely conveys the sense of what has been said, Mannyng gives the very words of the speaker, in simple, colloquial English. Homely expressions and pithy proverbs abound throughout, and the work is full of telling, felicitous metaphors, such as "tavern is the devyl's knyfe," or "kerchief is the devyl's sail," or "to throw a falcon at every fly."

Simplicity is, indeed, one of the most striking features of Mannyng's style. Writing, as he says, for ignorant men, he is at some pains to explain difficult terms or to give equivalents for them. Thus, when he uses the word "mattock," he remarks, in a parenthesis, that it is a pick-axe; and, in the same way, the term "Abraham's bosom" is carefully interpreted as the place between paradise and hell. And, in his anxiety that his hearers shall understand the spiritual significance of religious symbols, he calls to his aid illustrations from popular institutions familiar to all.

Baptism, he says, is like a charter which testifies that a man has bought land from his neighbour, confirmation is like the acknowledgment of that charter by a lord or king.

In dwelling on the personal relations of man to God, Mannyng, like the author of *Cursor Mundi*, often shows much poetic feeling. While he paints in sombre tones the dreadful fate of unrepentant sinners, he speaks no less emphatically of the love of God for His children and the sacrifice of Christ. His simple faith in the divine beneficence, combined with an intense sympathy for penitent man, lends a peculiar charm to his treatment of such stories as those of the merciful knight, and Piers the usurer.

Apart from its literary qualities, *Handlyng Synne* has considerable value as a picture of contemporary manners. Much of what is said on these points is borrowed from Wadington, but still more is due to Mannyng's personal observation. In his attacks on tyrannous lords, and his assertion of the essential equality of men, he resembles the authors of *Piers Plowman*. The knight is pictured as a wild beast ranging over the country; he goes out "about robbery to get his prey"; he endeavours to strip poor men of their land, and, if he cannot buy it, he devises other means to torment them, accusing them of theft or of damage to the corn or cattle of their lord. Great harm is suffered at the hands of his officers; for nearly every steward gives verdicts unfavourable to the poor; and, if the latter ask for mercy, he replies that he is only acting according to the strict letter of the law. But, says Mannyng, he who only executes the law and adds no grace thereto may never, in his own extremity, appeal for mercy to God.

But, if Mannyng is severe on tyrannous lords, he shows no leniency to men of his own calling. The common sins of the clergy, their susceptibility to bribes, their lax morality, their love of personal adornment, their delight in horses, hounds and hawks, all come under his lash, and, in words which may not have been unknown to Chaucer, he draws the picture of the ideal parish priest.

Although the order to which Mannyng belonged was originally founded for women, they receive little indulgence at his hands. Indeed, he surpasses William of Wadington and the average monastic writer in his strictures on their conduct. God intended woman to help man, to be his companion and to behave meekly to her master and lord. But women are generally "right unkind" in wedlock; for one sharp word they will return forty, and they desire always to get the upper hand. They spend what should be given to the

poor in long trains and wimples; they deck themselves out to attract masculine attention, and thus make themselves responsible for the sins of men. Even when the author has occasion to tell the story of a faithful wife who made constant prayer and offerings for the husband whom she supposed to be dead, he adds grudgingly,

> This woman pleyned (pitied) her husbonde sore,
> Wuld Gode that many such women wore!

For the ordinary amusements of the people Mannyng has little sympathy; he looks at them from the shadow of the cloister, and, to him, "carols, wrestlings, and summer games" are all so many allurements of the devil to entice men from heaven. The gay song of the wandering minstrel and the loose tales of [illegible] jongleurs who lie in wait for men at tavern doors are as [illegible] him as to the authors of *Piers Plowman*; even in the [illegible] with which girls deck their tresses he sees a subtle snare of Satan. Towards children he shows some tenderness, [illegible] need for greater physical indulgence than their elders, [illegible] upholds the counsel of Solomon to give them the [illegible] rod, so long as no bones be broken.

Mannyng's mode of translation renders a [illegible] his indebtedness to Wadington somewhat [illegible] his original will sometimes set him off on a [illegible] other times he keeps fairly close to the sense, [illegible] with it observations and parentheses of his own. [illegible] always tell the same tales as Wadington [illegible] adds at will; the fifty-four stories in the [illegible] represented in *Handlyng Synne* by [illegible] additions are taken from local legends [illegible] skill as a narrator is most apparent. [illegible] dent, the stories move quietly and [illegible] challenge comparison with those of Chaucer.

The verse of *Handlyng Synne* is the [illegible] metre of the original; but, as in the [illegible] lines occur which defy the most ingenious [illegible] in its state of transition afforded [illegible] irregularities; when there was no fixed [illegible] of the inflectional *-e* this was apt to be [illegible] will of the scribe. The three [illegible] survived, the Harleian, dated about [illegible] Dulwich, about 1400, show many [illegible]

The dialect of *Handlyng Synne* is [illegible]

type, containing more Scandinavian forms than are found in the language of Chaucer. The number of Romance words is much greater than in the Gloucester *Chronicle*, which may be explained partly by locality and partly by the fact that such forms are always more numerous in translations from the French than in original English compositions.

Mannyng's other work, the *Chronicle of England*, is of less general importance than *Handlyng Synne*; though of greater metrical interest. It consists of two parts, the first extending from the arrival of the legendary Brut in Britain to the English invasion, the second from the English invasion to the end of Edward I's reign. The first part, in octosyllabic couplets, is a close and fairly successful translation from Wace's version of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*; the second, in rimed alexandrines, is taken from an Anglo-Norman poem by Peter of Langtoft.

Langtoft's alexandrines, which are arranged in sets riming on one sound, seem to have puzzled Mannyng, and his attempt to reproduce them in the fourteen-syllabled line of the Gloucester *Chronicle* is not altogether successful. Sometimes the line is an alexandrine, but at others, and this is most significant, it is decasyllabic; moreover, though Mannyng tries to emulate the continuous rime of his original, he generally succeeds in achieving only couplet rime. Thus we see dimly foreshadowed the heroic couplet which Chaucer brought to perfection[1].

When, at the request of Dan Robert of Malton, Mannyng set about his chronicle, it was, probably, with the intention of following Langtoft throughout; but, on further consideration, he judged that, since the first part of Langtoft's chronicle was merely an abridgment of Wace, it was better to go straight to the original. So, after an introduction which contains the autobiographical details already given, and an account of the genealogy of Brut, he gives a somewhat monotonous and commonplace version of Wace's poem. Sometimes, he omits or abridges; sometimes, he adds a line or two from Langtoft, or the explanation of a word unfamiliar to his audience, or pauses to notice contemptuously some unfounded tradition current among the unlearned. Once, he digresses to wonder, with Geoffrey of Monmouth, that Gildas and Bede should have omitted all mention of king Arthur, who was greater than any man they wrote of save the saints. In all other lands, he says, men have written concerning him, and in France

[1] Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody*, I, 113.

more is known of the British hero than in the lands that gave him birth. But Mannyng's characteristic doubt of Welsh trustworthiness leads him to question the story of Arthur's immortality. "If he now live," he says contemptuously, "his life is long."

All through his version Mannyng, as might be expected, shows a more religious spirit than Wace; this is especially exemplified in the passages in which he points out that the misfortunes of the Britons were a judgment on them for their sins, and in the long insertion, borrowed from Langtoft and Geoffrey of Monmouth, of Cadwalader's prayer; and, as he nears the end of the first portion of his chronicle, he draws freely on Bede, telling at great length the story of St Gregory and the English boy slaves and the mission of St Augustine.

The second half of the chronicle is much more interesting than the first, partly because Mannyng adheres less slavishly to his original. Wright, in his edition of Langtoft's chronicle, has accused Mannyng of having frequently misunderstood the French of his predecessor; but, though instances of mistranslation do occur, they are not very frequent. The version is most literal in the earlier part; later, when Mannyng begins to introduce internal rimes into his verse, the difficulties of metre prevent him from maintaining the verbal accuracy at which he aimed.

But, notwithstanding the greater freedom with which Mannyng treats this part of the chronicle, his gift as a narrator is much less apparent here than in *Handlyng Synne*. Occasionally, it is visible, as when, for the sake of liveliness, he turns Langtoft's preterites into the present tense, and shows a preference for direct over indirect quotation. But such interest as is due to him and not to Langtoft is derived chiefly from his allusions to circumstances and events not reported by the latter and derived from local tradition. Thus, he marvels greatly that none of the historians with whom he is acquainted makes mention of the famous story of Havelok the Dane and Aethelwold's daughter Goldburgh, although there still lay in Lincoln castle the stone which Havelok cast further than any other champion, and the town of Grimsby yet stood to witness the truth of the history.

For the reign of Edward I, Mannyng's additions are of very considerable importance, and, as the authorities for these can be traced only in a few instances, it is a reasonable conclusion to suppose that he wrote from personal knowledge. He relates more fully than Langtoft the incidents of the attempt on Edward's life in Palestine, the death of Llywelyn and the treachery of the

provost of Bruges who undertook to deliver the English king into the hands of the enemy. It is, however, in connection with Scottish affairs that his additions are most noteworthy. Although he regards the Scots with the peculiar bitterness of the northern English, he follows with especial interest the fortunes of Bruce, with whom, as we have seen, he had been brought into personal contact.

The fragments of ballads given by Langtoft celebrating the victories of the English over the Scots occur also in Mannyng's version, and, in some cases, in a fuller, and what seems to be a more primitive, form. They are full of barbaric exultation over the fallen foe, and form a curious link between the battle songs in the Old English *Chronicle* and the patriotic poems of Laurence Minot.

One other work has been assigned to Robert Mannyng. This is the *Medytacyuns of þe soper of oure lorde Jhesu. And also of hys passyun. And eke of þe peynes of hys swete modyr, Mayden Marye. þe whyche made yn latyn Bonaventure Cardynall.* In the two manuscripts in which *Handlyng Synne* has survived in a complete form (Bodleian 415 and Harleian 1701), it is followed by a translation of the above work, but this alone is not sufficient evidence as to the authorship. The language, however, is east midland, and the freedom with which the original is treated, together with the literary skill indicated in some of the additions and interpolations, may, perhaps, justify the ascription of this work to Robert Mannyng; but the point is uncertain.

Of Mannyng's influence on succeeding authors it is impossible to speak definitely. The fact that only three manuscripts of his great work survive points to no very extensive circulation, and the resemblance of certain passages in *Handlyng Synne* to lines in the *Vision of Piers Plowman* and the *Canterbury Tales* may very well be due to the general opinion of the day on the subjects of which they treat. It has been noticed that the framework of *Handlyng Synne* is not unlike that of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*; but the custom of pointing the lesson of a dissertation by an illustrative narrative is common to didactic writers of all periods, and Gower's adoption of a method popular among approved moralists must have been intended to add zest to the delight of his audience in stories which were of a distinctly secular character.

The literary activity of the south-east of England during this time was less remarkable than that of the west and north; never-

theless, three writers of some importance, William of Shoreham, Dan Michel of Northgate and Adam Davy, call for mention here. Of these writers two were clerics; the third held the position of "marshall" in Stratford-at-Bow.

William of Shoreham's works are contained in a single manuscript (Add. MS 17,376) now in the British Museum; and, curiously enough, though the seven poems treat of the favourite themes of the medieval homilist, they take the form of lyrical measures. The first deals with the seven sacraments; the second is a translation of the well-known Latin *Psalms* printed in the *Lay Folk's Mass Book*, of which there are other metrical versions in Middle English; the third is a commentary on the ten commandments; and the fourth a dissertation on the seven deadly sins. Then comes a lyric on the joys of the Virgin, and, after that, a hymn to Mary, indicated, by the colophon, to be a translation from Robert Grosseteste. Last of all, is a long poem on the evidences of Christianity, the mystery of the Trinity, the Creation, the war in heaven and the temptation of Adam and Eve. Here the manuscript breaks off, but, from internal evidence, it is clear that the poet intended also to treat of the redemption.

Though he is handicapped by the form of verse chosen, the author shows a good deal of artistic feeling in his treatment of these well-worn themes. His favourite stanzas consist of seven or six lines, the former riming *abcbded*, the latter, *aabccb*; but he uses, also, alternately riming lines of varying length and the quatrain *abab*. His poems are characterised by the tender melancholy which pervades much English religious verse; he dwells on the transitoriness of earthly life, the waning strength of man and the means by which he may obtain eternal life and he pleads with his readers for their repentance and reformation.

From a reference in the colophon to Simon, archbishop of Canterbury, we may conclude that the present manuscript dates from the beginning of the reign of Edward III. From other colophons we learn that the poems were composed by William of Shoreham, vicar of Chart, near Leeds, in Kent.

The other important Kentish production of this time was the *Ayenbite of Inwyt* (the "again-biting" of the inner wit, the remorse of conscience), the value of which, however, is distinctly philological rather than literary. Our information as to its author is derived from his preface in the unique manuscript in the British Museum, which states that it was made with his own hand

by Dan Michel, of Northgate, in Kent, and belonged to the library of St Austin at Canterbury, and from a note at the end of the treatise, which adds that it was written in English for the sake of ignorant men, to guard them against sin, and that it was finished on the vigil of the holy apostles, Simon and Jude, by a brother of the cloister of St Austin of Canterbury, in the year 1340.

The *Aycnbite of Inwyt*, was not, however, an original work. It was a translation of a very popular French treatise, the *Somme des Vices et des Vertus* (known also as *Li Livres roiaux des Vices et des Vertus,* and *Somme le Roi*), compiled, in 1279, by frère Lorens, a Dominican, at the request of Philip the Bold, son and successor of Louis IX. This, in its turn, was borrowed from other writers, and was composed of various homilies, on the ten commandments, the creed, the seven deadly sins, the knowledge of good and evil, the seven petitions of the Paternoster, the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, the seven cardinal virtues and confession, many of which exist in manuscripts anterior to the time of frère Lorens.

The treatment of these subjects, especially in the section on the seven deadly sins, is allegorical. The sins are first compared with the seven heads of the beast which St John saw in the Apocalypse; then, by a change of metaphor, pride becomes the root of all the rest, and each of them is represented as bringing forth various boughs. Thus, the boughs of pride are untruth, despite, presumption, ambition, idle bliss, hypocrisy and wicked dread; while from untruth spring three twigs, foulhood, foolishness and apostasy. This elaborate classification into divisions and sub-divisions is characteristic of the whole work, and becomes not a little tiresome; on the other hand, the very frequent recourse to metaphor which accompanies it serves to drive the lesson home. Idle bliss is the great wind that throweth down the great towers, and the high steeples, and the great beeches in the woods, by which are signified men in high places; the boaster is the cuckoo who singeth always of himself.

Sometimes these comparisons are drawn from the natural history of the day, the bestiaries, or, as Dan Michel calls them, the "bokes of kende." Thus, flatterers are like to nickers (sea-fairies), which have the bodies of women and the tails of fishes, and sing so sweetly that they make the sailors fall asleep, and afterwards swallow them; or like the adder called "serayn," which runs more quickly than a horse, and whose venom is so deadly that no medicine can cure its sting. Other illustrations are

borrowed from Seneca, from Aesop, Boethius, St Augustine, St Gregory, St Bernard, St Jerome and St Anselm.

Unfortunately, Dan Michel was a very incompetent translator. He often quite fails to grasp the sense of his original, and his version is frequently unintelligible without recourse to the French work. It is noticeable, however, that it improves as it proceeds, as if he taught himself the language by his work upon it. The same MS contains Kentish versions of the Paternoster, the creed and the famous sermon entitled *Sawles Warde*, which is abridged from an original at least one hundred years older. It is a highly allegorical treatment of *Matthew*, xxiv, 43, derived from Hugo of St Victor's *De Anima*, and describes how the house of Reason is guarded by Sleight, Strength and Righteousness, and how they receive Dread, the messenger of Death, and Love of Life Everlasting, who is sent from heaven.

Certain resemblances between the *Ayenbite of Inwyt* and *The Parson's Tale* have led to the supposition that Chaucer was acquainted with either the English or the French version. It has recently been proved, however, that these resemblances are confined to the section on the seven deadly sins, and even these are not concerned with the structure of the argument, but consist, rather, of scattered passages. And, although the immediate source of *The Parson's Tale* is still unknown, it has been shown that its phraseology and general argument are very similar to those of a Latin tract written by Raymund of Pennaforte, general of the Dominicans in 1238, and that the digression on the seven deadly sins is an adaptation of the *Summa seu Tractatus de Viciis*, composed before 1261 by William Peraldus, another Dominican friar.

Another interesting production of the south-eastern counties is a poem of a hundred and sixty-eight octosyllabic lines, riming in couplets, known as the *Dreams* of Adam Davy, which appears to date from the beginning of the reign of Edward II. The author, who, as he himself informs us, lived near London, and was well known far and wide, tells how, within the space of twelve months, beginning on a Wednesday in August, and ending on a Thursday in September of the following year, he dreamed five dreams, concerning Edward the king, prince of Wales. In the first dream he thought he saw the king standing armed and crowned before the shrine of St Edward. As he stood there, two knights set upon him and belaboured him with their swords, but without effect. When they were gone, four bands of divers coloured light streamed out of each of the king's ears.

The second vision took place on a Tuesday before the feast of All Hallows, and, on that night, the poet dreamed that he saw Edward, clad in a gray mantle, riding on an ass to Rome, there to be chosen emperor. He rode as a pilgrim, without hose or shoes, and his legs were covered with blood. This theme is continued in the third vision, on St Lucy's day, when the seer thought that he was in Rome, and saw the pope in his mitre and Edward with his crown, in token that he should be emperor of Christendom.

In the fourth vision, on Christmas night, the poet imagined that he was in a chapel of the Virgin Mary and that Christ, unloosing His hands from the cross, begged permission from His Mother to convey Edward on a pilgrimage against the foes of Christendom; and Christ's Mother gave Him leave, because Edward had served her day and night.

Then came an interval in the dreams, but, one Wednesday in Lent, the poet heard a voice which bade him make known his visions to the king: and the injunction was repeated after the last vision, in which he saw an angel lead Edward, clad in a robe red as the juice of a mulberry, to the high altar at Canterbury.

The exact purpose of these verses is very difficult to determine. The manuscript in which they are preserved (Laud MS 622), appears to belong to the end of the fourteenth century; but the allusion to "Sir Edward the king, prince of Wales" is applicable only to Edward II. Perhaps they were designed to check the king in the course of frivolity and misrule which ended in his deposition; but the tone is very loyal, and the references to him are extremely complimentary. The poems are, in fact, intentionally obscure, a characteristic which they share with other prophecies of the same class, notably those attributed to Merlin and Thomas of Erceldoune. The same manuscript contains poems on the *Life of St Alexius*, the *Battle of Jerusalem*, the *Fifteen Signs before Domesday*, *Scripture Histories* and the *Lamentation of Souls*, which show many resemblances to the *Dreams*, and may also be by Adam Davy; if so, he must have been a man of education, since some of them seem to be derived directly from Latin originals.

The most important national poems of the first half of the fourteenth century are the war songs of Laurence Minot, preserved in MS Cotton Galba IX in the British Museum. The author twice mentions his name; from internal evidence it is probable that the poems are contemporary with the events they describe; and, as the last of them deals with the taking of Guisnes, in 1352,

it is supposed that he must have died about this time. Diligent research has failed to discover anything further about him, but Minot was the name of a well-known family connected with the counties of York and Norfolk. The language of the poems is, in its main characteristics, northern, though with an admixture of midland forms; and, in three of them, the poet shows detailed acquaintance with the affairs of Yorkshire. Thus, the expedition of Edward Baliol against Scotland, to which reference is made in the first poem, set sail from that county; in the ninth poem the archbishop of York receives special mention; and, in the account of the taking of Guisnes, Minot adopts the version which ascribes the exploit to the daring of a Yorkshire archer, John of Doncaster.

The events which form the subject of these poems all fall between the years 1333 and 1352. The first two celebrate the victory of Halidon Hill, which, in the poet's opinion, is an ample recompense for the disgrace at Bannockburn; the third tells how Edward III went to join his allies in Flanders, and how the French attacked Southampton and took an English warship, the *Christopher*; the fourth relates the king's first invasion of France, and Philip's refusal to meet him in battle; the fifth celebrates the victory at Sluys, mentioning by name the most valiant knights who took part in it; the sixth is concerned with the abortive siege of Tournay in the same year; and the seventh tells of the campaign of 1347 and of the battle of Crecy. Then come two poems on the siege of Calais and the battle of Neville's Cross. These are followed by an account of a skirmish between some English ships and some Spanish merchantmen; and the eleventh and last poem relates the stratagem by which the town of Guisnes was surprised and taken.

The poetical value of these songs has been somewhat unduly depreciated by almost every critic who has hitherto treated of them. Their qualities are certainly not of a highly imaginative order, and they contain scarcely one simile or metaphor; but the verse is vigorous and energetic and goes with a swing, as martial poetry should. The author was an adept in wielding a variety of lyrical measures, and in five poems uses the long alliterative lines which occur in such poems as *William of Palerne* and *Piers Plowman* in rimed stanzas of varying length. The other six are all written in short iambic lines of three or four accents, variously grouped together by end-rime. Alliteration is a very prominent feature throughout, and is often continued in two successive lines, while the last words of one stanza are constantly repeated in the first line of the next, a frequ

contemporary verse. The constant recourse to alliteration detracts, somewhat, from the freshness of the verse, since it leads the author to borrow from the romance writers well-worn tags, which must have been as conventional in their way as the hackneyed pastoral terms against which Wordsworth revolted. Such are "cares colde," "cantly and kene," "proper and prest," "pride in prese," "prowd in pall"; with many others of a similar nature.

In spite of the highly artificial structure of the verse, however, the language itself is simple, even rugged, and the poems dealing with the Scottish wars bear a strong resemblance to the rude snatches of folk-song which have already been mentioned in connection with Mannyng's translation of Langtoft's chronicle. There is the same savage exultation in the discomfiture of the Scots, the same scornful references to their "rivelings" (impromptu shoes made of raw hide) and the little bags in which they were wont to carry their scanty provisions of oatmeal. And the very simplicity of the narrative conveys, perhaps better than a more elaborate description, the horrors of medieval warfare; in reading these poems we see the flames spread desolation over the country, while hordes of pillagers and rough riders are driven in scattered bands to their own land; or we behold the dead men "staring at the stars" or lying gaping "between Crecy and Abbeville." Nor is the pomp of military array forgotten; we see the glitter of pennons and plate armour, the shining rows of shields and spears, the arrows falling thick as snow, the red hats of the cardinals who consult together how they may beguile the king, the ships heaving on the flood, ready for battle, while the trumpets blow, and the crews dance in the moonlight, regardless of the waning moon that foretells disaster on the morrow. Strange merchantmen, transformed, for the time, into war vessels, loom in the Channel, hiding in their holds great wealth of gold and silver, of scarlet and green; but in vain do these pirates come hither with trumpets and tabors, they are already doomed to feed the fishes. There is no thought of mercy for a fallen foe; only in one place does any sense of compassion seem to affect the poet. When he tells how the burgesses of Calais came to demand mercy from Edward, he puts into the mouth of their leader a pitiful description of their plight. Horses, coneys, cats and dogs are all consumed; the need of the petitioners is easily visible in their appearance; and they that should have helped them are fled away. But Minot says nothing about the intercession of queen Philippa, related by Froissart.

Minot seems to have been a professional gleeman, who earned his living by following the camp and entertaining soldiers with the recitation of their own heroic deeds. It is possible, however, that his skill in versification may have led to his promotion to the post of minstrel to the king, and that he held some recognised office about the court. His poems, unlike those of Barbour, which were composed long after the occasions they commemorated, were, probably, struck off to celebrate events as they arose, and, in one of them, that on the siege of Tournay, his exultation seems to have been somewhat premature. While Barbour's *Bruce* is a long, sustained narrative, composed in the same metre throughout, the verse of Minot is essentially lyric in character, and, as has been seen, ranges over a large variety of measures.

Minot's patriotism is everywhere apparent. His contempt for the "wild Scots and the tame" (the Highland and Lowland Scots) is undisguised, and he has equally small respect for the lily-flowers of France. When the English meet with misfortune, he always finds plenty of excuses for them. Thus, in the fight at Southampton, the galleymen were so many in number that the English grew tired, but, "since the time that God was born and a hundred years before, there were never any men better in fight than the English, while they had the strength." His admiration and loyalty for the king are without measure. The most is made of Edward's personal bravery at Sluys, his courteous thanks to his soldiers and the esteem shown him by foreign dignitaries, while the poet continually insists on the righteous claim of his sovereign to the throne of France. And, though his poems are sometimes quite unhistorical in matters of fact, they are important in that they evidently reflect the growing feeling of solidarity in the nation, and the patriotic enthusiasm which made possible the victories of Sluys and Crecy.

CHAPTER XVII

LATER TRANSITION ENGLISH

II

Secular Lyrics; Tales; Social Satire

From the middle of the thirteenth century to the days of *Piers Plowman*, writers of English were still polishing the tools used in the preceding century. We have seen their predecessors at work in monasteries on saints' lives and religious verse; chroniclers have come under consideration; and the flourishing of romance, both home-grown and imported, has been noted. It remains to discuss the evidence which is gradually accumulating that neither court nor cloister were to exercise a monopoly in the production and patronage of English letters: there was also "the world outside." Certain of the romances—*Havelok* notably—bear traces, in their extant forms, of having been prepared for ruder audiences than those which listened, as did the ladies and gentlemen of plague-stricken Florence towards the close of this period, to tales of chivalry and courtly love and idle dalliance.

A famous collection of Middle English lyrics[1] shows signs that there were writers who could take a keen pleasure in "notes suete of nyhtegales," in "wymmen" like "Alysoun" and in the "northerne wynd." There are still poems addressed to "Jhesu, mi suete lemman," full of that curious combination of sensuousness and mysticism which is a notable feature of much of the religious verse of these centuries; but more purely worldly *motifs* were beginning to be preserved; tales which were simply amusing and cared little for a moral ending were being translated; and indications appear that the free criticism of its rulers, which has always been a characteristic of the English race, was beginning to find expression, or, at any rate, preservation, in the vernacular.

To the early years of the period under consideration belongs one of the most beautiful of Middle English lyrics:

Sumer is i-cumen in,
  Lhude sing cuccu[2].

Its popularity is attested by the existence of the music to which it

[1] Harl. MS. 2253, Brit. Mus. [2] Harl. MS. 978.

was sung in the first half of the thirteenth century. If summer had not yet "come in," spring, at any rate, was well on the way when verses *like these* became possible. A sense of rime, of music, of sweetness, had arrived; the lines were settling down into moulds of equal length, and were beginning to trip easily off the tongue to an expected close. And, instead of the poet feeling that his spirit was most in harmony with the darker aspects of nature, as was the case with several of the Old English writers whose works have been preserved, the poet of the Middle English secular lyric, in common with the poet of *The Owl and the Nightingale*, feels "the spring-running" and cannot refrain from entering into the spirit of it with a gladsome heart:

Groweth sed and bloweth med,
And springth the wde nu[1].
Sing cuccu!
Awe bleteth after lomb,
Lhouth after calve cu:
Bulluc sterteth, bucke verteth[2],
Murie sing cuccu!

The same note is struck, only more often, in the Harleian lyrics above referred to, which are dated, approximately, 1310, and were collected, apparently, by a clerk of Leominster. The slim volume in which these lyrics were printed sixty-five years ago, by Thomas Wright[3], contains poems familiar, perhaps, to most students of English poetry and familiar, certainly, to all students of English prosody. The measures of the *trouvères* and troubadours had become acclimatised in England—Henry III had married a lady of Provence—so far as the genius of the language and the nature of the islanders permitted; and the attempt to revive the principle of alliteration as a main feature, instead of, what it has ever been and still is, an unessential ornament, of English verse was strong in the land. And first among these spring poems, not so much in respect of its testimony to the work of perfecting that was in progress in the matter of metre, as in its sense of the open air, and of the supremacy of "humanity," is the well-known Alison lyric beginning

Bytuene Mershe & Averil
When spray biginneth to springe,
The lutel foul hath hire wyl
On hyre lud[4] to synge;

[1] now. [2] runs to the greenwood.
[3] *Specimens of Lyric Poetry composed in England in the Reign of Edward I*, Percy Society, 1842. Some had been printed before by Warton and Ritson.
[4] In her own language.

Ich libbe[1] in love-longinge
For semlokest of alle thynge,
He may me blisse bringe,
  Icham in hire baundoun[2].
An hendy hap ichabbe yhent[3],
Ichot from hevene it is me sent,
From alle wymmen mi love is lent[4]
  & lyht on Alysoun.

There is a world of difference between these lines and the ideal of convent-life set forth in *Hali Meidenhad*[5]. By natural steps, the erotic mysticism that produced the poems associated with the Virgin cult passed into the recognition, not merely that there were "sun, moon and stars," "and likewise a wind on the heath," but also that there existed earthly beings of whom

Some be browne, and some be whit...
And some of theym be chiry ripe[6].

In another of the Harleian poems, "the wind on the heath" inspires a refrain:

Blou, northerne wynd,
Send thou me my suetyng.
Blou, northerne wynd, blou, blou, blou!

which, by its very irregularity of form, shows the flexible strength that was to be an integral feature of the English lyric. Yet another poem has lines:

I would I were a thrustle cock,
A bountyng or a laverok,
    Sweet bride!
Between her kirtle and her smock
    I would me hide:

which form a link in the long chain that binds Catullus to the Elizabethan and Jacobean lyrists. And the lines beginning

Lenten ys come with love to toune,
With blosmen & with briddes roune[7]

are full of that passionate sense of "the wild joys of living" which led "alle clerkys in joye and eke in merthe" to sing

Right lovesom thu art in May thu wyde wyde erthe.

[1] live.
[2] power.
[3] Good fortune has come to me.
[4] turned away.
[5] See *ante*, p. 229.
[6] *A Song on Woman*, MS. Lambeth 306, 135, printed by Wright and Halliwell, *Reliquiae Antiquae*, I, 248.
[7] song. Cf. *The Thrush and the Nightingale*, Digby MS. 86, Bodl., printed in *Reliquiae Antiquae*, I, 241 "Somer is comen with love to toune," etc.

The *Proverbs of Hendyng*, "Marcolves sone," are to be found in the MS that contains the above lyrics and may, therefore, be mentioned here. They appear to have been collected from older material in their present form before the close of the thirteenth century; and they recall the wisdom literature to which reference has already been made in dealing with Old English proverbs[1] and with the poems attributed to Alfred. These proverbs are obvious summaries of the shrewd wisdom of the common folk, which is as old as the hills, and not confined to any one race or country:

> Tel thou never thy fo that thy fot aketh,
> Quoth Hendyng...
> Dere is botht the hony that is licked of the thorne;

and they enshrine many phrases that are still common property:

> Brend child fur dredeth,
> Quoth Hendyng;

but their main interest for us lies in the form of the stanzas which precede the proverb, and which consist of six lines rimed *aabaab*; here it is evident that the nebulous outlines of earlier attempts have taken shape and form out of the void, and become the ballad stanza; the unrimed shorter lines are now linked by end-rime, and the reciter from memory is aided thereby.

The literature of the Middle Ages was of a much more "universal," or cosmopolitan, character than that of later times—it will be remembered that "the book" in which Paolo and Francesca "read that day no more" was the book of *Lancelot* and not a tale of Rimini—and, one of the reasons for this width of range was that letters were in the hands of a few, whose education had been of a "universal," rather than a national, type. English literature, in the vernacular, had to compete for many a long year, not only with Latin, which, even so late as the days of Erasmus, was thought to have a fair chance of becoming the sole language of letters[2], but, also, though in a rapidly lessening degree, with Norman-French, the language of all who pretended to a culture above that of the common folk. And it is to Latin, therefore, that we have often to turn for evidence of the thoughts that were beginning to find expression not only among monastic

[1] *Cf. A Father's Instruction*, *ante*, p. 62.

[2] *Cf.* also, its long use in legal documents: "To substitute English for Latin as the language in which the King's writs and patents and charters shall be expressed, and the doings of the law-courts shall be preserved, requires a statute of George II's day." Maitland, in Traill's *Social England*, Vol. I.

chroniclers and historians, but also among social satirists and writers of political verse. At first the amusement of those only who had a knowledge of letters, Goliardic verses and political satires in Latin became models for the imitation of minstrels and writers who set themselves to please a wider circle, and who made themselves the mouthpieces of those who felt and suffered but could not express.

Some hint of what the people had liked to hear in the way of tales is preserved for us in *The Deeds of Hereward*[1], a son of Lady Godiva, and an offspring of the native soil, the recital of whose horse-play in the court of the king and of whose deeds on his speedy mare Swallow would appeal to all who liked the tale of Havelok, the strapping Grimsby fisher lad, scullery boy and king's son. But the secular tale and satirical poem of the thirteenth and fourteenth century appealed to a different audience and are of direct historical value. In Latin and in English, the tyranny and vice and luxury of the times are strongly condemned, the conduct of simoniacal priest and sensual friar is held up to ridicule; and, in that way, the ground was prepared for the seed to be sown later by the Lollards. Monasticism, which had risen to an extraordinary height during the reign of Stephen and borne excellent fruit in the educational labours of men like Gilbert of Sempringham, began to decline in the early years of the thirteenth century. Then came the friars; and their work among the people, especially in relieving physical suffering, was characterised by a self-sacrificing zeal which showed that they were true sons of Assisi; but there were some among those who succeeded them whose light lives and dark deeds are faithfully reflected in the songs and satires of Middle English; and there were others, in higher stations, equally false to their trust, who form the subject of the political verse coming into vogue in the vernacular. Even though it be borne in mind that the mutual antagonism between regulars and seculars, and between members of different orders, may be responsible for some of the scandals satirised, and that there was always a lighter side to the picture—against bishop Golias and his clan there were, surely, people like Richard Rolle of Hampole—yet sufficient evidence remains, apart from the testimony of Matthew Paris, of the steadily growing unpopularity of monks and friars, and the equally steady growth of the revolt of the people against clerical influence.

Social satire of the nature indicated is seen in Middle

[1] Extant in a Latin version only.

English in the few examples of the *fabliau* still extant. The short amusing tale in verse appealed greatly to the Frenchman of the thirteenth century; and, though the few that have survived in English show strong signs of their foreign origin, their popularity proved that they were not only accepted as pleasing to "the ears of the groundlings" but as reflecting, with somewhat malicious, and wholly satiric, glee, the current manners of monk and merchant and miller, friar and boy. *The Land of Cokaygne* tells of a land of gluttony and idleness, a kitchen-land, not exactly where it was "always afternoon," but where the monk could obtain some of the delights of a Mohammadan paradise. The very walls of the monastery are built "al of pasteiis," "of fleis, of fisse and riche met," with pinnacles of "fat podinges";

> The gees irostid on the spitte
> Fleeȝ to that abbai, god hit wot,
> And gredith[1], gees al hote, al hot;

and entrance to this land could only be gained by wading

> Seve ȝere in swineis dritte...
> Al anon up to the chynne.

The Land of Cokaygne has relatives in many lands; it lacks the deep seriousness of the Wyclifian songs that came later, and the light satirical way in which the subject is treated would seem to imply that a French model had been used, but its colouring is local and its purpose is evident.

Dame Siriz, an oriental tale showing traces of the doctrine *of the transmigration of souls*, was put into English after many wanderings through other languages, about the middle of the thirteenth century, and is excellently told in a metre varying between octosyllabic couplets and the six-lined verse of the *Sir Thopas* type. Other renderings of the same story are contained in *Gesta Romanorum* (28), *Disciplina Clericalis* (XI) and similar collections of tales; and the imperfect poem in the form of a dialogue between *Clericus* and *Puella*, printed by Wright and Halliwell[2], may be compared with it. A tale of this kind was certain of popularity, whether recited by wandering minstrel or committed to writing for the pleasure of all lovers of comedy. To the "common form" of an absent and betrayed husband, is added the Indian device of the "biche" with weeping eyes (induced by mustard and pepper), who has been thus transformed from human shape because of a refusal to listen to the amorous solicitations of

[1] cry. [2] *Reliquiae Antiquae*, I, 145.

a "clerc." The device is used by the pander, Dame Siriz, who, for twenty shillings, promises another "clerc" to persuade the merchant's wife to yield to his desires.

There is, unfortunately, very little of the famous satirical beast epic *Reynard the Fox* that can be claimed for England. Some of the animals were known to Odo of Cheriton, the fabulist, who makes use of stories of Reynard to point the moral of his sermons; and a short *fabliau* of about the same period as those above mentioned is extant; but this is about all. In *The Vox and the Wolf* is cleverly related, in bold and firm couplets, the familiar story of the well and the device of Renauard for getting himself out of it at the expense of the wolf Sigrim. The teller of the story in Middle English is learned in his craft, and the poem is an admirable example of comic satire, perhaps the best of its kind left to us before the days of Chaucer. Not only are the two characters well conceived, but they are made the vehicle, as in the romance of the Fleming Willem, of light satire on the life of the times. Before admitting the wolf to the paradise in the bucket at the bottom of the well, the fox takes upon himself the duties of a confessor, and the wolf, to gain absolution asks forgiveness, not only for the ordinary sins of his life, but, after a little pressing even repents him of the resentment shown when the confessor made free with the penitent's wife. Few things show more clearly the failings and vices current in the Middle Ages than do the various stories of the deeds of Reynard in his ecclesiastical disguises: stories that were carved in stone and wood and shown in painted glass, as well as recited and written. His smug cowled face looks out from pulpits and leers at us from under *miserere* seats.

The literary needs of those who were familiar with the "romances of prys" in which deeds of chivalry were enshrined, and who, with the author of *Sir Thopas*, could enjoy parodies of them, were met by such salutary tales as *The Turnament of Totenham*. A countryside wedding, preceded by the mysteries of a medieval tournament, is described by Gilbert Pilkington, or by the author whose work he transcribes, in language that would be well understood and keenly appreciated by those of lower rank than "knight and lady free." It is an admirable burlesque; rustic "laddis" contend not only for Tibbe the daughter of Rondill the refe, but for other prizes thrown in by the father:

> He shalle have my gray mare [on which Tibbe "was sett"],
>   And my spottyd sowe;

and, therefore, Hawkyn and Dawkyn and Tomkyn and all ...

youths "ffro Hissiltoun to Haknay," "leid on stifly," "til theyre hors swett," with much "clenkyng of cart sadils" and many "brokyn hedis," and

> Woo was Hawkyn, woo was Herry,
> Woo was Tomkyn, woo was Terry

when they sat down to the marriage feast of the winner. The *Tale of Thopas* exercises its useful office with a rapier; if *The Turnament of Totenham* performs its duty with a cudgel, the result, so far as the victim is concerned, is none the less effective.

The middle of the fourteenth century gave us *The Tale of Gamelyn*[1], which is dealt with elsewhere as a metrical romance and in connection with the works of Chaucer. It forms an admirable link between the courtly romance and the poetry of the outlaws of the greenwood. A younger brother, despoiled of his share in the inheritance, is ill-clothed and given poor food by his eldest brother, handed over to understrappers to be thrashed and otherwise maltreated. But, after the fashion of Havelok, Gamelyn proves himself adept at the staff and strong in the arm; and, after a fair supply of adventures, with much success and further tribulation, he becomes head of a forest band of young outlaws; then, after justice has been done to his unnatural brother, he becomes king's officer in the woodland. It is a "loveless" tale of the earlier Stevenson kind; no courtly dame has part or parcel therein; nevertheless, in the form in which we now have it, *The Tale of Gamelyn* is quite excellent, is, in fact, typically English in its sense of free life and open air.

Of the two collections of stories referred to above, one, the most famous of its kind, and the source-book for many later English writers, *Gesta Romanorum*, probably took shape in England, in its Latin form, in the period under discussion. Early preachers and homilists were only too willing to seize hold of stories from every quarter in order to "point the moral," and their collections have served many ends different from the purpose designed. If the "moral" attached to each tale, and dragged in, often, on the most flimsy excuse, be ignored, the tales in *Gesta Romanorum* become readable, for they are often excellently, even though baldly, told. Other Latin collections of cognate kind, the work of English compilers, have been referred to in a preceding chapter[2], and all are of importance in the light they throw on the manners of the time. One, the *Summa Praedicantium* of John de Bromyarde, a Dominican friar, scholar of Oxford and antagonist of Wyclif,

[1] Volume I, p. 298, Volume II, pp. 191 ff. [2] See Chapter X, Map, Neckham, etc.

devotes a thousand pages to subjects likely to be acceptable to congregations, and deserves more attention than has hitherto been paid it. In the legendaries and poems compiled and written by monks for homiletic purposes, there are many germs of the tale-telling faculty, and much folk-lore. Things charming and grotesque are inextricably mixed. In the legends of the *Childhood of Jesus*, for instance, there is a delightful account of the reverence paid by the animal creation and by inanimate nature to the Infant during the journey to Egypt; and then the poem is marred by the addition of crude miraculous deeds recorded as afterwards wrought by Him. Many of our tales have originally come from the east; but, in spite of the proverb, they have gathered much moss in rolling westward, and flints from the same quarry that have travelled a fairly direct course look strangely different from others that have zigzagged hither.

Of Middle English political verses, the earliest preserved are, probably, those on the battle of Lewes, which was fought in 1264. The battle was celebrated by a follower of the fortunes of Simon de Montfort, in a poem which is of considerable philological and metrical importance. The number of French words it contains reveals the process of amalgamation that was going on between the two languages, and lets us into the workshop where the new speech was being fashioned. The interest of the poem is also considerable from the evidence it furnishes that the free-spoken Englishman was beginning to make the vernacular the vehicle of satire against his superiors in the realm of politics, following the example of the writers of the Latin satirical poems then current. The educated part of the race was beginning to show signs of the insular prejudice against foreigners which is not even absent from it to-day—though it could loyally support "foreigners" when they espoused the national cause—and, more happily, it was showing signs of the political genius which has ever been a quality of our people. Metrically, these political lyrics in the vernacular are of importance because of the forms of verse experimented in and naturalised. The minstrel who sang or recited political ballads had to appeal to more critical audiences than had the composer of sacred lyrics; he had to endeavour to import into a vernacular in transition something of the easy flow of comic Latin verse. *The Song against the King of Almaigne*[1], above referred to, is in mono-rimed four-lined stanzas, followed by a "bob," or shorter fifth line, "maugre

[1] Richard of Cornwall, King of the Romans, brother of Henry III.

Wyndesore," "to helpe Wyndesore," etc., and a constant, mocking, two-lined refrain, with a kind of internal rime:

> Richard, thah thou be ever trichard[†],
> trichen shalt thou never more.

The recurrence of lines consisting of perfect anapaests[*] and showing but little tendency towards alliteration, indicates the direction in which popular rimes were looking.

Milton and Shelley and Cobbett. In the *Song of the Husbandman* one of the notable poems of the alliterative revival, which may be dated towards the close of the thirteenth century, in octaves and quatrains rimed alternately on two rimes with linked ending and beginning lines—a complicated measure handled with great skill—the tiller of the soil complains that he is robbed and picked "ful clene"; that, because of the green wax, he is hunted "ase hound doth the hare." And the insolence of the grooms and stable boys, the lackeys and servants, of the great towards the peasantry is told in the rude, coarse lines of *A Song against the Retinues of the Great People*, preserved in the same MS[1].

The lutherness[2] of the ladde,
The prude[3] of the page,

are the subject of as keen invective as are the deeds of the consistory courts[4], where the peasants are treated as dogs.

When Edward I died, the writer of an elegy on his death expressed the pious hope that "Edward of Carnarvon" might

ner be worse man
Then is fader, ne lasse of myht
To holden is pore-men to ryht
& understonde good consail.

It remained an unrealised hope; and the condition of things in the times of Edward II is reflected in the fugitive literature of his reign. The curiously constructed lines in Anglo-Norman and English *On the King's Breaking his Confirmation of Magna Charta*, preserved in the Auchinleck MS, Edinburgh, and the *Song on the Times* in lines made up of Latin, English and Anglo-Norman phrases, tell the same tale of ruin and corruption. Before the end of the reign, Bannockburn had been fought and won, fought and lost; Scottish girls could sing of the mourning of their southern sisters for "lemmans loste"; and, in place of an elegy on the death of a king who "ber the prys" "of Christendome[5]," we have a poem in the Auchinleck MS on *The Evil Times of Edward II*, which, in some 470 lines, pitilessly describes the misery of the state and the evil of the church. It is a sermon on the old text, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon," "no man may wel serve tweie lordes to queme," and every line bites in, as with the acid of an etcher, some fresh detail of current manners. As soon as the

[1] Harl. 2253, ed. Wright.
[2] malicious ill-temper.
[3] conceit.
[4] *Political Songs of England*, 1839.
[5] *Elegy on Edward I*, before cited.

young priest can afford it, he has a concubine; if those in high places protest, "he may wid a litel silver stoppen his mouth"; the doctor is the doctor of the comedies of Molière, a pompous charlatan, ready enough to take silver for his advice, "thouh he wite no more than a gos wheither" the patient "wole live or die"; "the knights of old" no longer go forth on brave, if Quixotic, quests, they are "liouns in halle, and hares in the field," and any beardless boy can be dubbed of their company; everywhere are the poor of the land oppressed

> Ac if the king hit wiste, I trowe he wolde be wroth,
> Hou the pore beth i-piled, and hu the silver goth;
> Hit is so deskatered bothe hider and thidere,
> That halvendel shal ben stole ar hit come togidere,
> and acounted;
> An if a pore man speke a word, he shal be foule afrounted.

Before the fourteenth century had come to a close, the ravages of the Black Death had brought about radical changes in the relations of labourers to the soil and had left indelible impressions on life and letters. The presence of a disease that, at its height, meant the death of one out of every two people in London and, in the eastern counties, of two out of every three, led to a relaxation of the current laws of life and to the Peasants' Revolt in 1381. The outbreak of lawlessness consequent upon the dislocation of life in town and country, and the labour troubles that followed, sent outlaws to the greenwood and helped to build up the legends of Robin Hood. Murmurs of discontent grew in volume, and protests against papal authority acquired fresh strength by the existence of the Great Schism. The Lollards began their attacks on social abuses and sought to reform the church at the same time. The people "spoke," and, though the "cause" was not "finished" for many centuries to come, yet the end of many of the political and religious ideals of the Middle Ages was in sight. Wyclif, and those associated with him, had begun their work, the poems that go by the name of *Piers Plowman* had been written and the "commons," in the fullest sense of the word, were beginning their long struggle for political freedom.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PROSODY OF OLD AND MIDDLE ENGLISH

Of Old English poetry, anterior to the twelfth century and, perhaps, in a few cases of that century itself, it has been calculated that we have nearly thirty thousand lines. But all save a very few reduce themselves, in point of prosody, to an elastic but tolerably isonomous form, closely resembling that which is found in the poetry of other early Teutonic and Scandinavian languages. This form may be specified, either as a pretty long line rigidly divided into two halves, or as a couplet of mostly short lines rhythmically connected together by a system of alliteration and stress. Normally, there should be four stressed syllables in the line, or two in each of the half couplets; and at least three of these syllables should be alliterated, beginning with the same consonant or any vowel, as in this line (29) of *The Wanderer*:

Wenian mid wynnum. Wat se þe cunnað.

Around or between the pillar or anchor stresses, unstressed syllables are grouped in a manner which has sometimes been regarded as almost entirely licentious, and sometimes reduced, as by Sievers, to more or less definite laws or types. Probably, as usual, the truth lies between the two extremes.

To any one, however, who, without previous knowledge of the matter, turns over a fair number of pages of Old English verse, a singular phenomenon will present itself. For many of these pages the line-lengths, though not rigidly equated, will present a coast-line not very much more irregular than that of a page of modern blank verse. And then, suddenly, he will come to pages or passages where the lines seem to telescope themselves out to double their former length. The mere statistical process of enumeration, and of subsequent digestion into classes of more or less resembling type, finds no difficulty in this, and merely regards it

as an instance of "stretched" or "swollen" verses, with three or four accents in each half instead of two. Curiosity of a different kind may, perhaps, pine for a little explanation of a more real nature—may wish to know whether this lengthening was parallel, say, to Tennyson's at the close of *The Lotos Eaters*—a definitely concerted thing—or whether it was a mere haphazard licence. But there are no means of satisfying this curiosity except by conjecture. Further, our means of deciding whether, as is usually said, the stressed syllables were bound to be "long" beforehand or not are very scanty. It seems admitted that more than one short syllable may do the duty of one long; and this is of the highest importance. What, however, is certain is that, in spite of this great variation of length, and in spite of considerable differences, not merely in syllabic volume, between the members of the "stretched" and unstretched groups respectively, there is a certain community of rhythmical tone, sometimes full, sometimes muffled, which not only distinguishes the whole body of this ancient poetry, but is distinguishable, with some alteration, in the later revived alliterative verse of Middle English up to the beginning of the sixteenth century. In order to detect and check this, the student should take the *Corpus Poeticum* of Old English and read pages of different poems steadily, letting his voice accommodate itself to the rhythm which will certainly emerge if he has any ear. Different ears will, perhaps, standardise this rhythm differently, and it certainly admits of very wide variation and substitution. The simplest and most normal formula—not necessarily the one which mere statistics will show to be commonest as such, but that which in itself, or in slight variations from it, predominates—appears to the present writer to be

tum-ti-ti }
ti-tum-ti } tum-ti | tum-ti tum-ti.

like stanzas (though the number of lines in them is variable) are formed by a refrain:

þaes ofereode, þisses swa maeȝ[1].

With some rashness, it has been assumed that this semi-lyrical arrangement was the earlier, and that it broke down into the continuous form. It may be so; but, in Old English, at any rate, we have no evidence to show it.

Further, in the main range of this poetry, though not to such an exclusive extent, rime is absent. Attempts have been made to discover it in some of the mainly rimeless poems of later dates; but the instances adduced are probably accidental. In fact, the majority of them, alleged chiefly by German critics, are not properly rimes at all, and are often mere similarities of inflection. The real exceptions are (1) the famous piece in the *Exeter Book* called, significantly, The *Riming Poem*, which exhibits a system, probably imitated from the Norse, of internal, and sometimes frequently repeated, consonance at the ends of lines and half lines; and (2) a few fragments, especially the inset in the *Chronicle* about the imprisonment and death of the "guiltless aetheling" Alfred. They are exceptions which eminently prove the rule. A quest for assonance has also been made, and a few instances of something like it have been pointed out. But they are very few. Assonance, in fact, has never held any important place in English prosody; and, where it exists in unsophisticated times and instances, it is always, most probably, the result either of inattention or of an attempt to rime. On the whole, the body of Old English verse, as we have it, is one of the most homogeneous to be found in any literature. Alliteration, accent and strict separation of lines or half-lines for its positive laws; rimelessness for its negative: these nearly sum up its commandments, and its result is dominated by an irregular quasi-trochaic rhythm which will retreat, but always comes back again.

When, after the lapse of some two centuries, which furnish only scraps of verse, we meet, at, or before, the end of the twelfth century, with a fresh crop of English poetry, the results of prosodic scrutiny are strikingly different. Instead of the just summarised regularity—not in the least cast-iron, but playing freely round two or three recognised principles, which are never absolutely deserted,

[1] See *ante*, p. 36.

and attempting nothing beyond their range—we find what may, at first, look like chaos; what has sometimes been taken for the same dispensation a little obsolescent and broken down, but, when examined fully and fairly, is seen to be a true period of transition. The old order finds itself in face of a new, which does not by any means merely replace it or destroy it; but, after an inevitable stage of confusion, blends with it and produces something different from either, something destined to be permanent as far as we can yet see. In all the pieces usually dated a little before or a little after 1200—the fragments of St Godric, *Paternoster*, *The Moral Ode* and others, as well as the two long compositions of Layamon and Orm—this process and its results are observable. The new agency is the syllabic prosody (accentual, also, in general character, but strictly syllabic) of French and of contemporary Latin, with its almost invariable accompaniment of rime, and its tendency, invariable also in French, though by no means so in Latin, to iambic rhythm. It must be sufficient here to examine the working out of this clash in the two long poems just referred to, *Ormulum* and the *Brut*, with slighter remarks on the others. In both poems it is possible to trace the older principle of a rimeless line of more or less length, divided sharply in the middle, or a rimeless couplet of two halves, in which, though not invariably, there is a certain tendency to shorten the second. But the two writers have been affected by the opposite and newer system in ways curiously different, but quite intelligible as results of the clash. Orm has unflinchingly kept to the old principle of rimelessness; but he has as unflinchingly adopted the new principles of uniformity in syllabic volume and of regular iambic metrical beat. His lines are invariably of fifteen syllables, or his couplets of eight and seven. That he achieves—as any example, however selected, must show—nothing but the most exasperating and wooden monotony, does not matter to him, and it ought not *to matter to us. He has sacrificed everything to regularity in* number and cadence, and he has achieved this.

Layamon's result, if not more actually important, is much more complicated, much more interesting, with much more future in it; but, for these very reasons, it is much less easy to summarise. In fact, to summarise it in uncontroversial terms is very nearly impossible. At first sight, if we can suppose an eye familiar with Old English poetry and not familiar at all with Middle En[illegible] it may seem to present no great difference from the former[illegible] there are still some who think that it does not present an[illegible]

is vital. But, when it is examined a little more carefully, differences the most vital, if as yet sometimes not more than embryonically vital, emerge. Regarded as alliterative verse of the old pattern, it can only be called very bad verse—verse which turns the already abundant liberties of the original into mere chaotic licence, for the most part, and which very seldom conforms at all successfully. But, in addition to this, it succumbs, constantly though irregularly, to the temptation which, except in late and few instances, the old verse had rigidly resisted, and which Orm was resisting absolutely—the temptation of rime. And this rime seems to be forcing on it a new regularisation, that of equal-halved distichs rimed together in the exact fashion of the French octosyllabic couplet.

When we turn to the other and smaller poems of the period we find this process of "slowly quickening into other forms" even more importantly and interestingly exhibited. The *Paternoster* is wholly in more or less regular rimed couplets of the kind just noted. In *The Moral Ode*, the fifteen-syllabled line of Orm, which, by the frequency of feminine endings, already promises the reduction to fourteen, comes even nearer to the ballad metre of eight and six, and exhibits a still more valuable characteristic in its tendency towards maintaining the old syllabic freedom and substitution of trisyllabic feet for the strict dissyllables of *Ormulum*. Further, this heritage of Old English manifests itself in the octosyllabic couplet; and, in the version of *Genesis and Exodus*, which is assigned to about the middle of the thirteenth century, anticipates exactly the *Christabel* metre which Coleridge thought he invented more than five hundred years later. And, before very long, though at dates impossible to indicate with precision, owing to the uncertainty of the chronology of the documents, other approximations of the old staple line or couplet to the metres of French and Latin (especially the *rime couée* or combination of two eights and a six doubled) make their appearance. These transformations, however, as the liberty of their forms shows, and as may be specially studied with greatest ease in the various adaptations of the octosyllabic couplet, are neither mere aimless haphazard experiments, nor mere slavish following of French and Latin forms previously existing and held up as patterns. They may be much more reasonably regarded as attempts to adjust these latter to the old couplet with its middle division, and its liberty of equality or inequality of syllabic length in the halves; though, in all cases, the special rhythm of the older line or stave

has become faint in the ear, and the new metrical swing prevails. An equal division of the halves gives a distich which, for some time, hesitates between eight and six syllables, the latter having the additional assistance of the French alexandrine as pattern. But it proves less suitable for English verse than the longer form, and it is dropped or very rarely used. An unequal division—from the first most popular—into eight and seven or eight and six, gives the long line of Robert of Gloucester—sometimes called, for convenience, a "fourteener" or, by Warton and others, but most improperly, a "long alexandrine." This, when itself "disclosed" in "golden couplets," becomes at once the famous "common" or ballad measure, the most distinctly popular metre for seven hundred years past, and, at certain times, one yielding the most exquisite harmony possible, though very easily degraded and reduced to sing-song. In the course, moreover, of the give and take of this commerce between material and mould, the beginnings of the great decasyllabic, five-foot, or five-stress line emerge with a frequency which has, for the most part, been inadequately *noted*; as well as, more rarely, the alexandrine itself. In fact, it furnishes the poet, by luck or design, with every possible line from four, or even fewer, syllables to fourteen; while his examples in Latin and French in turn furnish almost endless suggestions of stanza-combination.

In one all-important particular, however, the foreign influence exercised—by French altogether and, by Latin, in the greatest part by far of its recent and accentual verse writing—in the direction of strict syllabic uniformity, is not, indeed, universally, but, to a very large extent, and stubbornly, resisted. The rimelessness of Old English might be given up with pleasure; its curious non-metrical, or hardly more than half-metrical, cadences might be willingly exchanged for more definite harmony; the chains of its forced alliteration might be attenuated to an agreeable carcanet worn now and then for ornament; and its extreme length-licence might be curtailed and regularised. But, in one point which had made for this latter, English refused to surrender; and that was the admission of trisyllabic feet, as some phrase it, or, as some prefer to describe the process, the admission of extra unstressed syllables. The question was, indeed, not settled; *as* a question it, no doubt, never arose; and, when such problems came to be considered, there was a dangerous tendency from late in the sixteenth *century* till later in the eighteenth to answer them in the wrong way. *But* practice was irreconcilable. Of the octosyllabic couplet there were,

almost from the first, two distinct forms, the strict and the elastic; in nearly all other metres the licence is practically assumed. By 1300, or a little later, say 1325—to admit the latest possible dates for the Harleian lyrics and the bulk of the early romances—all the constitutive principles of modern English prosody are in operation, and are turning out work, rougher or smoother, but unmistakable.

One curious postscript has to be made to these few general remarks. During the period just referred to—from Layamon, that is to say, to the appearance of *William of Palerne* and other things, at a time probably nearer to the middle of the fourteenth century than to its beginning—attempts at the old alliterative metre are absolutely wanting. It is not unusual to meet with assumptions that, though wanting, they must have existed, at any rate in popular literature; and to these assumptions, as to all such, no reasonable answer can be made, except that it may have been so. So far, however, no trace of any such verse in the period referred to has been discovered; nor any reference to such; nor any evidence, direct or indirect, that it existed. About the end of the period it reappears: sometimes, simple of itself, with a cadence altered, indeed, but not out of all likeness, after the fashion that was to produce its capital example in *The Vision of Piers Plowman*; sometimes, in a very remarkable blend with rime, and with metrical and stanza arrangement, after the fashion of which the most notable instances, in less and more regular kind, are *Gawayne and the Grene Knight* and *Pearl*. But this revival or reappearance has no effect on the main current of English verse; which continues to be distinctly metrical, to be, in effect universally, rimed and to use alliteration only for a separable and casual ornament, not as a constituent and property.

CHAPTER XIX

CHANGES IN THE LANGUAGE TO THE DAYS OF CHAUCER

1. Continuity of the English Language.

The three Germanic peoples—the Jutes from Jutland, the Angles from Schleswig and the Saxons from Holstein—who, in the fifth and sixth centuries, made themselves masters of the greater part of south Britain, spoke dialects so nearly allied that they can have had no great difficulty in understanding each other's speech. It does not appear, however, that, in their original seats, they had any general name for their common race or their common language. The sense of their unity, with the consequent need for a general designation for themselves, would, naturally, be the product of the time when they found themselves settled among a population speaking an alien and unintelligible tongue. In fact it was probably not by themselves, but by other nations that the Jutes, Angles and Saxons of Britain were first regarded as forming an ethnic whole; just as in earlier times the larger kindred of which they were part had received the name of Germans from the Celts. The Britons applied to all the Germanic invaders of their country the name of Saxons, because, in the days of Roman rule, that nation had been the most conspicuous among those who ravaged the coasts of Britain; and, as is well known, the Celtic-speaking [illegible]

[illegible]

Germanic conquerors of Britain seem, for a long time, to have been called indiscriminately sometimes Saxons, after the Celtic practice, and sometimes Angles, the latter being the name of the people which had the largest extent of territory. At the end of the sixth century, Pope Gregory I uses only the name *Angli*. This is a somewhat remarkable fact, because the missionaries sent by Gregory laboured in the Jutish kingdom of Kent, which, at that time, was paramount over all the country south of the Humber. Possibly, the explanation of Gregory's choice of this name may be found in

the famous story, according to which his zeal for the conversion of the pagans of Britain was first awakened by his admiration of the beauty of the boy slaves from the Anglian kingdom of Deira. On the other hand, about A.D. 660, pope Vitalian, writing to an Angle king, Oswiu of Northumbria, addresses him as *rex Saxonum*.

The Roman missionaries naturally followed Gregory's practice; and it was probably from the official language of the church that the Jutes and Saxons learned to regard themselves as part of the "Angle kindred" (Angolcynn, in Latin *gens Anglorum*). The political ascendency of the Angle kingdoms, which began in the seventh century, and continued until the time of the Danish invasions, doubtless contributed to ensure the adoption of this general name. In the early years of the eighth century, Bede sometimes speaks of *Angli sive Saxones*, thus treating the two appellations as equivalent. But, with this sole exception, his name for the whole people is always *Angli* or *gens Anglorum*, and he calls their language *sermo Anglicus*, even when the special reference is to the dialect in which the Kentish laws were written. When he does speak of *lingua Saxonica*, the context, in every instance, shows that he means the language of the East or West Saxons. It is true that Bede was an Angle by birth, and this fact might seem to detract from the significance of his use of the name. But, a century and a half later, the West Saxon king Alfred, whose works are written in his native dialect, never uses any other name for his own language but Englisc—the language of the Angles. It is in the great king's writings that we find the earliest vernacular examples of the name which our language has ever since continued to bear.

In a certain sense it may be said that this name, as applied to the language of the south of England, became more and more strictly appropriate as time went on. For the history of southern English, or of the language of English literature, is, to a considerable extent, concerned with the spread of Anglian forms of words and the disappearance of forms that were specifically Saxon. Moreover, several of the most important of the processes of change that transformed the English of Alfred into the English of Chaucer —the loss of inflections and grammatical gender, and the adoption of Danish words—began in the Anglian regions of the north, and gradually extended themselves southward. Leaving out of account the changes that were due to French influences, we might almost sum up the history of the language during five centuries in the

formula that it became more and more "English" and less and less "Saxon."

It will be convenient at this point to give some account of the history of the nomenclature of the various stages in the development of the English language. When, in the sixteenth century, the remains of vernacular literature earlier than the Norman conquest began to attract the attention of scholars, Englishmen naturally found it inconvenient to apply the name of "English" to what to them was, practically, a foreign language, requiring not less study to understand than the Flemish of their own day. It became customary, therefore, to speak of this language as "Saxon." As the few pre-Conquest texts then known were written in the south, this designation may be said to have been accurately descriptive. It was so, however, merely by accident, for those who employed it were accustomed to use the term "Saxons" as a general name for the Germanic inhabitants of England before the Norman conquest. The popular view was that the "English" people and the "English" language came into being as the result of the fusion of "Saxons" and Normans. Traces of this misuse of names, indeed, are to be found in various forms of expression that are still current. Although the double misnomer of "the Saxon heptarchy" no longer appears in our school histories, modern writers continue to speak of "the Saxon elements in the English vocabulary," and to misapply the epithet "Saxon" to the architecture of the parts of the country inhabited by the Angles.

The term "Saxon," besides being historically incorrect as a designation for the whole early Germanic population of Britain, was inconveniently ambiguous, because it survived as the proper appellation of a portion of the inhabitants of Germany. In the last years of the reign of Elizabeth, Camden revived the use of the old name *Anglosaxones*, and, probably for the first time, used *lingua Anglosaxonica* for the language of England before the Norman conquest. He explains that *Anglosaxones* means the Saxons of England, in contradistinction to those of the continent; and, in his English *Remains*, he, accordingly, renders it by "English Saxons." Throughout the seventeenth century, and even later, "English Saxon" continued to be the name ordinarily applied by philologists to the language of king Alfred, but, in the eighteenth century, this gave place to "Anglo-Saxon."

Camden's explanation of the compound name was, there can be little doubt, historically correct. In its early use, it was applied to distinguish those Saxons who were considered *part of the*

"Angolcynn," and whose language was called "English," from the "Old Saxons," who remained in Germany; and the structure of the native form *Angulseaxe* shows that the first element was intended as a descriptive prefix. It was, however, natural that the compound should be interpreted as meaning "Angle and Saxon," and, apparently, it was taken in this sense already at the end of the seventeenth century by George Hickes, who also applied the analogous name "Dano-Saxon" to the Old Northumbrian dialect, under the mistaken notion that its peculiar features were the result of Scandinavian admixture. As thus misunderstood, the term "Anglo-Saxon" was accepted as supplying the need for a general name applicable to the Anglian and Saxon dialects in their fully inflected stage. In this comprehensive sense it continues to be extensively used. The proposal of some scholars to restrict its application, on grounds of historical propriety, to the Saxon dialect failed to gain acceptance, because what was wanted was an inclusive name for the early language of England, as the object of a well-defined branch of linguistic study. When professorships of "Anglo-Saxon" had been founded at Oxford and Cambridge, it was hardly possible to narrow the meaning of the name to a part of the subject which the professors were appointed to teach.

As a popular designation, the name "Anglo-Saxon" has the merits of definiteness and intelligibility, which may possibly long preserve it in use. It has, however, the great disadvantage of concealing the important fact that the history of our language from the earliest days to the present time has been one of continuous development. When this fact became evident through the attention bestowed by scholars on the language of the thirteenth century, the inconvenience of the traditional nomenclature could not escape recognition. The language of this period was too different from the Anglo-Saxon of the grammars to be conveniently called by the same name, while, on the other hand, it could hardly be called English, so long as "English" was understood to mean a language which the unlearned reader could at once perceive to be substantially identical with his own. An attempt was made to meet the difficulty by the invention of the compound "Semi-Saxon," to denote the transitional stage between "Anglo-Saxon" and "English," but this name was so obviously infelicitous that its introduction helped to procure acceptance for a nomenclature which recognised that the language of Caedmon was no less "English" than that of Chaucer. The great German philologist,

1500, because the end of the fifteenth century coincides pretty closely with the victory of the printing-press over the *scriptorium*; and many of the distinctive features of literary Modern English would never have been developed if printing had not been invented.

2. Changes in Grammar.

The most striking characteristic of Old English, as compared with later stages of the language, is that it retained without essential change the inflectional system which it possessed at the beginning of its history. So far as regards the verbs, this system was very imperfect in comparison with that of Greek, or even of Latin. There was no inflected passive, the need of which was supplied by the use of auxiliaries; and there were only two inflected tenses: the present, which often had to serve for a future, and the past. The use of auxiliaries for forming compound tenses was comparatively rare. The three persons of the plural had only one form, which, prehistorically, had been that of the third person; and, in the past tense, the first and third person singular were alike. On the other hand, the system of declension was nearly as elaborate as in any of the languages of the Indogermanic family. Substantives had four cases: nominative, accusative, genitive and dative. The adjective had two sets of inflections for gender, number and case—the one used when the substantive was "definite" (as when preceded by the article or some equivalent), and the other when it was "indefinite." So far as this description goes, it might appear that the Old English machinery for expressing the grammatical relations of substantives, adjectives and pronouns was as adequate for its purpose as even that of Greek. But, owing to the effect of prehistoric changes of pronunciation, which had assimilated many terminations that were originally distinct, the Old English declension of these parts of speech was, in fact, full of inconvenient ambiguities. This will be evident if we place side by side the paradigms of the word *guma*, a man, in Gothic (which, in this instance, agrees very nearly with primitive Germanic) and in Old English.

		Gothic.	*Old English.*
Sing.	*Nom.*	guma	guma
	Accus.	guman	guman
	Gen.	gumins	guman
	Dative	gumin	guman
Plur.	*Nom.*	gumans	guman
	Accus.	gumans	guman
	Gen.	gumanē	gumena
	Dative	gumam	gumum

The Gothic declension of this noun, it will be seen, has only one weak point, namely, that the accusative plural had assumed the form of the nominative. But, in Old English, the one form *guman* had five different functions. There were, in Old English, many other declensions of nouns besides that of which the word *guma* is an example; and all of them were, more or less, faulty. The accusative had nearly always the same form as the nominative. In some nouns the genitive singular, and in others the nominative plural, did not differ from the nominative singular.

These observations apply to the West Saxon or southern dialect of Old English, in which most of the extant literature is written. But, while the West Saxon system of noun-inflection was thus seriously defective, that of the Northumbrian dialect was far worse, because, in that dialect, the final *-n* had come to be regularly dropped in nearly all grammatical endings; and, further, the unaccented final vowels were pronounced obscurely, so that we often find them confused in our texts. It was quite an exceptional thing for the case and number of a substantive to be unambiguously indicated by its form. The ambiguities were, to some extent, obviated by the inflection of the accompanying article or adjective; but the declension even of these parts of speech, though better preserved than that of the substantive, had, itself, suffered from wear and tear, so that there were only a few of the endings that had not a multiplicity of functions.

The imperfection of the Old English system of inflections must sometimes have caused practical inconvenience, and some of the changes which it underwent were due to instinctive efforts to remedy its defects. These changes naturally began where the evil was greatest, in the northern dialect. It used to be believed—and the notion is not altogether extinct—that the almost universal substitution of *-es* for the many Old English endings of the genitive singular and the nominative and accusative plural was a result of the Norman conquest. But, in fact, the beginnings of this alteration in the language can be traced to a far earlier time. In the Northumbrian writings of the tenth century we find that, very often, when the traditional ending of a noun failed to indicate properly its case and number, the required clearness was gained by assimilating its declension to that of those nouns which made their genitives in *-es* and their plurals in *-as*. As *-es* was the only ending of nouns that never marked anything but a genitive singular, and *-as* the only ending that never marked anything but a nominative or accusative plural, the improvement in lucidity

very considerable. We lack definite evidence as to the rapidity with which these two endings came, in the northern dialect, to be applied to nearly all substantives, but the process probably occupied no very long time. The change of declension synchronised with a tendency, which prevailed in all dialects, to obscure the pronunciation of the vowels in all unstressed final syllables, so that *-as* became *-es*. The practice of forming genitives and plurals, as a general rule, with this ending spread from the northern to the midland dialect; perhaps this dialect may, in part, have developed it independently. In the *Peterborough Chronicle* (about 1154), and in the north midland *Ormulum* (about 1200), we find it fully established. The English of educated Londoners had, in the fourteenth century, lost most of its original southern peculiarities, and had become essentially a midland dialect. Hence, the writings of Chaucer show, as a general rule, only the *-es* plurals and the *-es* genitives; the "irregular plurals," as we may now call them, being hardly more numerous than in modern standard English. Words adopted from French often retained their original plurals in *-s*. The dative case disappeared from midland English in the twelfth century, so that Chaucer's declension of substantives is as simple as that of our own day.

In purely southern dialects, the history of the noun-inflections was quite different. The case-endings of Old English—West Saxon and Kentish—were, to a great extent, retained, with the alterations that resulted from the general reduction of their vowels to an obscure *e*. One consequence of this "levelling" of vowels was that there was a large number of nouns of which the nominative singular ended in *-e* and the nominative plural in *-en*, as *name*, *namen*, *tunge* (tongue), *tungen* (in Old English *nama*, *naman*, *tunge*, *tungan*); and, as the *-n* was, in these words, felt as a formative of the plural, it was dropped in the oblique cases of the singular. Hence, in these words all the cases of the singular ended in *-e*, and the nominative and accusative plural in *-en*. To the extensive declension thus arising all nouns ending in *-e* came to be assimilated, including feminine nouns in which this ending had been extended from the oblique cases to the nominative singular, such as *honde* hand (Old English *hond*, dative *honda*), *sunne* sin (Old English *synn*, dative *synne*). We observe here the same instinctive struggle against the ambiguities induced by the progress of phonetic change that we have seen in the noun-declension of the northern and midland dialects, although the remedial

devices adopted were different. In the period with which we are here concerned, southern English did not greatly extend the *-es* genitives beyond their original range, while *-es*, as a plural ending, was nearly confined to those nouns that had *-as* in Old English, and to neuters (like *word*) in which the singular and plural nominatives had had the same form. The Old English termination *-um*, which marked the dative plural in all declensions, survived as *-en*. The genitive plural had two forms, *-e* and *-ene* (Old English *-a*, *-ena*); the latter, as the more distinct, encroached on the domain of the former, so that "king of kings" was *kingene king* instead of *kinge king* (Old English *cyninga cyning*).

The history of pronominal forms, like that of the declension of nouns, exhibits certain changes serving to relieve the want of distinctness in the traditional system. These changes began in the Anglian districts, and did not, for the most part, reach the Saxon region till after Chaucer's time. The forms of the Old English pronouns of the third person, in all dialects, were, in several instances, curiously near to being alike in pronunciation. The masculine nominative *hē* was not very different from the feminine nominative and accusative *hēo* (also *hīe*, *hī*), and this closely resembled the plural nominative and accusative *hīe* or *hī*. The dative singular masculine and neuter was *him*, and the dative plural was *heom*. The genitive and dative singular of the feminine pronoun was *hire*, and the genitive plural was *heora*. The one form *his* served for the genitive both of the masculine *hē* and of the neuter *hit*. (The forms here cited are West Saxon, the divergences of the other dialects being unimportant.) As the pronouns were most commonly unemphatic, such differences as those between *him* and *heom*, *hire* and *heora*, would, usually, be slighter in speech than they appear in writing, and with the general weakening of unstressed vowels that took place in Middle English they were simply obliterated. In southern Middle English the resulting ambiguities remained unremedied; but, in the north and a great part of the midlands, they were got rid of by the process (very rare in the history of languages) of adopting pronouns from a foreign tongue. In many parts of these regions the Danes and Northmen formed the majority, or a powerful minority, of the population, and it is from their language that we obtain the words now written *they*, *their*, *them* and, perhaps, also *she*, though its precise origin is not clear. *She* (written *scæ*) occurs in the *Peterborough Chronicle* about 1154. It does not appear in *Ormulum* (about 1200) which retains the native pronoun in the form *zho*, the somewhat

later east midland *Genesis and Exodus* has both words, *ghe* or *ge* and *sge* or *sche*. After 1300, *scho* is universal in the northern dialect and *sche* in east midland; but *ho* was common in west midland down to the end of the century, and still remains in the local speech of many districts. *Ormulum* has always *they* (written þeȝȝ), but retains *heore*, *hemm* beside the newer *their*, *them* (written *þeȝȝre*, *þeȝȝm*); in the fourteenth century *they*, *their*, *them* are found fully established in all northern and east midland writings, while, in the west, *hy* for "they" continued in use. Early in the twelfth century, the accusative form of all pronouns, except the neuter *hit*, had been replaced by the dative. Chaucer uses *she* and *they*; but his *her* serves both for "her" (accusative, genitive and dative) and for "their," and he has always *hem* for "them." In the south, the curious form *hise* or *is* was used for "them." With regard to the other pronouns it will suffice to mention that the form *ich* (with *ch* pronounced as in "rich") was general in the south, while, elsewhere, the Old English *ic* became *I* early in the thirteenth century.

The Old English inflections of adjectives and article, and, with them, the grammatical genders of nouns, disappeared almost entirely early in Middle English. The Kentish dialect of the fourteenth century, indeed, was exceptionally archaic in these points; in the *Ayenbite* (written 1340) we find, for instance, the accusative masculine form of the adjective and article in "*ane gratne* dyeuel" (a great devil) and "*thane* dyath," for which Chaucer would have written "*a gret* deuel" and "*the* deeth." In other districts of the south, also, considerable traces of grammatical gender and adjective inflection are found quite late. But the north midland English of *Ormulum* is, in these respects, nearly identical with that of Chaucer. The article is regularly *the* undeclined; gender is determined purely by sex; and the adjective (with rare exceptions) has no other inflectional endings than the final *-e* used when the adjective precedes a definite or a plural noun. In the north, where final unstressed vowels had been silent, the adjective and article were uninflected, and grammatical gender had ceased to exist, before the fourteenth century.

Among the most easily recognisable characteristics of Middle English dialects are certain differences in the conjugation of the verb. In Old English, the third person singular, and all the persons of the plural, of the present indicative, ended in *-th*, with a difference in the preceding vowel: thus, *lufian* to love, *lǣran* to teach, give (in West Saxon) *hē lufath*, *hē lǣreth*, and *wē lufiath*,

we lúvath. In the northern dialect, this *-th* had, in the tenth century, already begun to give way to *-s*; and northern writings of about 1300 show *-es* both in the third singular and in the plural as the universal ending. The midland dialect, from 1200 onwards, had in the plural *-en*, perhaps taken over from the present subjunctive or the past indicative; this ending, often reduced to *-e*, remains in the language of Chaucer. The third singular ended in *-eth* in midland English (so also in Chaucer); but the northern *-s*, which has now been adopted almost everywhere, even in rustic speech, is found in many midland writings of the fourteenth century, especially in those of the west. The southern dialect preserved the West Saxon forms with little change: we find *he luveth, we luvieth* in the fourteenth century. The plural indicative present of the verb *to be* had several quite unconnected forms in Old English: *sindon* and *béoth* in all dialects, *earon, aron* in Northumbrian and Mercian. In the thirteenth century, *sinden* occurs in the north midland *Ormulum* and some southern writings. In the fourteenth century, northern writings have *are* (monosyllabic), midland varies between *aren* or *are* and *been, ben*, while the southern form is *beoth* or *buth*.

The Northumbrian dialect had, in the tenth century, already reduced the *-an* of the infinitive to *-a*, and, in the northern English of the fourteenth century, the infinitive and the first person singular present were destitute of endings (the final *-e*, though often written, being shown by the metre to be silent). In other dialects, the infinitive ended in *-en*, for which *-e* occurs with increasing frequency from the thirteenth century onwards. Chaucer and Gower have both forms; their metre requires the final *-e* to be sounded in this as in most of the other instances, but it is probable that, in ordinary speech, it was generally silent before A.D. 1400.

The forms of the present participle, which, in Old English ended in *-ende*, afford a well-marked criterion of dialect in [illegible] The northern dialect had *falland*, the southern [illegible] midland dialect, *fallande* or *fallende* gradually [illegible] *fallinge*, which is the form used by [illegible]

It is impossible in this chapter to [illegible] early English inflections in all its [illegible] subject of the development of the [illegible] words on the question how far [illegible] declension and conjugation in [illegible] was an effect of the [illegible]

held, and still entertained by many persons, that the establishment of Norman rule was the main cause by which this change was brought about, is now abandoned by all scholars. We have seen that, in the north of England, the movement towards a simpler grammatical system had made no small progress a hundred years before duke William landed; and the causes to which this movement was due were such as could not fail to be increasingly effective. The intimate mixture of Danish and native populations in the north and over a great part of the midlands must, no doubt, have had a powerful influence in reinforcing the tendencies to change that already existed. So far as these districts are concerned, it is not too much to say that the history of English grammar would have been very nearly what it actually was if the Conquest had never taken place. It is peculiarly worthy of note that the southern dialect, which we should expect to be most affected by the French influence, and which, with regard to vocabulary, certainly was so, was, of all dialects of Middle English, the most conservative in its grammar. And there is good reason to believe that, even in the south, the *spoken* language had travelled a considerable distance towards the Middle English stage before the fateful date A.D. 1066. Only twenty years after the Conquest, the Norman scribes of Domesday Book, writing phonetically and without influence from English tradition, spell local and personal names in a way which shows that the oral language had undergone certain changes that do not regularly manifest themselves in native writings until much later. And some of the charters of the time of Edward the Confessor, which exhibit modernisms that are commonly attributed to the scribes of the late MSS in which they are preserved, are, probably, less altered from their original form than is generally imagined. This remark applies especially to informal documents not proceeding from professional scriveners, such, for instance, as the interesting letter of the monk Edwin about 1057, printed in Kemble's *Codex Diplomaticus*, No. 922.

What the Norman conquest really did was to tear away the veil that literary conservatism had thrown over the changes of the spoken tongue. The ambition of Englishmen to acquire the language of the ruling class, and the influx of foreign monks into the religious houses that were the sources of literary instruction, soon brought about the cessation of all systematic training in the use of English. The upper and middle classes became bilingual; and, though English might still be the language which they

preferred to speak, they learned at school to read and write nothing but French, or French and Latin. When those who had been educated under the new conditions tried to write English, the literary conventions of the past generation had no hold upon them; they could write no otherwise than as they spoke. This is the true explanation of the apparently rapid change in the grammar of English about the middle of the twelfth century.

It would, however, be a mistake to say that the new conditions produced by the Conquest were wholly without influence on the inflectional structure of the spoken language. Under the Norman kings and their successors, England was politically and administratively united as it had never been before; intercourse between the different parts of the country became less difficult; and the greater freedom of intercommunication assisted the southward diffusion of those grammatical simplifications that had been developed in the northern dialect. The use of the French language among large classes of the population, which has left profound traces in the English vocabulary, must have tended to accelerate the movement towards disuse of inflectional endings; though this influence must remain rather a matter of abstract probability than of demonstrable fact, because we have no means of distinguishing its effects from those of other causes that were operating in the same direction. Perhaps the use of the preposition *of* instead of the genitive inflection, and the polite substitution of the plural for the singular in pronouns of the second person, were due to imitation of French modes of expression; but, in other respects, hardly any specific influence of French upon English grammar can be shown to have existed.

In the main, therefore, the differences between the grammar of Old English and that of the English of Chaucer's day must be ascribed to internal agencies, helped to a certain extent by the influence of the language of the Scandinavian settlers. The French influence introduced by the Norman conquest had only a comparatively small effect.

3. Pronunciation and Spelling.

The runic alphabet that had been used by the heathen English was, soon after their conversion, superseded (for most purposes) by the Latin alphabet of 22 letters, to which afterwards were added the three characters ƿ (*w*, called *wynn*), þ (*th*, called *thorn*), which

belonged to the runic alphabet, and ð, differentiated from *d* by the addition of a cross-bar. The last-mentioned character was used indifferently with þ, the two sounds of our modern *th* (in *thick* and in *this*) not being graphically distinguished. The *u* or *v*, and the *i*, were, in ordinary Old English spelling, used only as vowels, the Latin practice of using them as consonants not being followed. On the early coins, the sound expressed in modern French by *u* and in German by *ü* was rendered by writing a V with an I inside it. This compound character in MSS became *ẏ*, and this was identified with the Roman *y*. Instead of *qu*, the combination *cƿ* was used in Old English; *k* occurs in some MSS, but was commonly replaced by *c*; *z* was used, though very seldom, with its contemporary Latin value of *ts*.

It is not necessary to give in this place any account of the changes in orthography during the Old English period. About A.D. 1000, the vowels were probably sounded nearly as in modern Italian, except that *æ* stood for a sound intermediate between those of *a* and *e* (*i.e.* the modern southern sound of *a* in *pat*), and that *y*, as already remarked, was like the French *u*. The long vowels, which had the same sounds as the corresponding short vowels prolonged, were, at an early period, denoted by doubling, and, later, by a mark (about equally resembling an acute and a circumflex accent) over the letter; but this was often omitted. The consonants had, for the most part, the same sounds as in modern English, but some exceptions must be mentioned. Several consonant letters had more than one sound, and, in the case of most of these, modern English retains the Old English pronunciation, though not always the same written symbol. Thus, in *fan* fan, *ǣfen* even, *sǣd* seed, *rīsan* rise (sounded "rize"), *þynne* thin, *brōþor* brother, *caru* care, *cealc* chalk, *scēap* sheep, *scōl* school, *gōd* good, *gēar* year, *þing* thing, *sengan* to singe, *docga* dog, *ecg* edge, the Old English sounds of *f*, *s*, *þ*, *c*, *sc*, *g*, *ng* and *cg* were exactly, or nearly, those of the letters occupying the same place in the modern forms of these words. In the middle or at the end of a word, *g* was sounded differently according to the nature of the neighbouring vowels: in *dæg* day it was pronounced like *y* in "year," but in the plural *dagas* days it had a sound that might be written *gh*, differing from the *ch* in *loch* just as *g* differs from *k*. The letter *h*, when initial, was pronounced as at present; but, in other positions, it was pronounced like the German *ch* (either guttural as in *ach* or palatal as in *ich*, according to the sounds which it followed). It will be seen that, with

few exceptions, our ancestors of the eleventh century pronounced the consonantal part of their words much as we do, even when they wrote it with different letters.

The striking change in the written language of England during the twelfth century was, to a considerable extent, a matter of mere spelling. As was pointed out in the preceding section, soon after the Norman conquest children ceased to be regularly taught to read and write English, and were taught to read and write French instead. When, therefore, the mass of the new generation tried to write English, they had no orthographical traditions to guide them, and had to spell the words phonetically according to French rules. They used *ch* instead of the old *c*, when it was pronounced as in *cirice* church. The sound of the Old English *sc* in *sceamu* shame, which did not exist at that time in French, was rendered by *ss*, *ssh*, *sch*, or *sh*. The French *qu* took the place of *cƿ*. The *f* between vowels (pronounced *v*) was replaced by *u* or *v* (these being still, as long afterwards, treated as forms of one and the same letter, used indifferently for vowel and consonant). The Old English symbol *æ* was dropped, its place being taken by *a* or *e*. The sound of the Old English *y*, in the dialects where it survived, was expressed by *u*; and that of the Old English long *u* was written *ou*, as in French.

Of course, these changes did not take place all at once. It is not to be supposed that no one ever read an Old English MS, and there was, for a long time, some mixture of the traditional spelling with the new one. Some few English sounds admitted of no tolerable representation in the French alphabet; and for the expression of these the native characters were retained in use. The letters þ, ð and ƿ were used, though often blunderingly, even by scribes who, in other respects, were thoroughly French in their spelling; though often we find their sounds awkwardly rendered by *t*, *th*, *ht*, or *d*, and *u*. And in the twelfth century, though the continental variety of the Roman alphabet was generally used for writing English, it was found convenient to retain the native form ʒ of the letter *g* for those two of its sounds that the French *g* lacked, namely, those of *gh* and *y* (as in *year*). A new letter was thus added to the alphabet, and, though it came to be written ȝ, exactly like the contemporary form of *z*, it preserved its name "yok" until the fourteenth century. It may be remarked in passing that the ambiguity of pronunciation of this letter has misled modern writers into calling the author of the *Brut* "Layamon" in[illegible] of "Laghamon"; the incorrect form, however, has beco

known to be displaced. In addition to the two original values of the "yok," it very early obtained a third use, being employed (without indicating any change of pronunciation) instead of the Old English *h* in certain positions, as in *kniȝt, ibroȝt, rouȝ*, for which the older spelling was *cniht, gebroht, ruh*. But, in the fourteenth century, many writers substituted *y* or *i* for ȝ, when pronounced as in *ȝeer* (year), and *gh* in all other cases. In the thirteenth century, the letters ƿ and ð went out of use, the former being replaced by the northern French *w*. The letter þ was retained; but, although it was still called "thorn" in the fourteenth century, it seems in Chaucer's time to have been regarded as a mere compendium for *th*, which generally took its place except initially. It may be noted that Thomas Usk, in the acrostic sentence of his *Testament of Love* (1387) spells *þin* (thine) with the four letters THIN. The adoption of a number of French words like *ioie* (joy), in which *i* was pronounced like the modern English *j*, introduced the consonantal use of this letter into English orthography.

The Old English initial combination *hl* survived (written *lh*) in some dialects down to the fourteenth century; but *hr* was very early reduced to *r*. For the Old English *hw*, Middle English writers substituted *wh*, though the *h* was, at first, often omitted in this combination as in other positions, by scribes of French education. The northern spelling *qua, quilk* for *wha, whilk* (who, which) arose from a dialectal pronunciation of *qu* as *wh*, which still survives locally in a few words.

From the twelfth century onwards, the letter *y*, when used as a vowel, was treated as a mere alternative form of *i*.

Ormulum is written in a peculiar phonetic spelling devised by the author himself. This is based, to a considerable extent, on native tradition, though the handwriting is of the continental type. There are, however, some of the new features. Orm uses *ch* and *sh* as we do now, and retains the Old English form of *g* for the two sounds which the French *g* had not. A device peculiar to himself is the appropriation of different shapes of the letter *g* to the two sounds in *god* (good) and *egge* (edge). But the most noteworthy characteristic of his orthography is the method of indicating the quantity of the vowels. The shortness of a vowel, in a syllable ending with a consonant, is shown by doubling the following consonant, as in *Crisstenndom*. When the short vowel ended a syllable in the middle of a word, Orm marked it as in *tăkenn*, and very often (though not always) indicated a long vowel by one,

two, or even three "acute accents" over the letter. This elaborate and cumbrous system found no imitators, but, as preserved in the author's autograph MS, it is one of the most important aids that we possess for ascertaining the English pronunciation of the time.

The changes in spelling that we have thus far noticed are merely changes in the manner of *representing* sound. There were others that were the result of altered pronunciation. It very often happens that very considerable changes take place in the sounds of a language without affecting the spelling, even when (as was, apparently, the case in Middle English) there is no general prejudice against deviations from traditional correctness of orthography. Pronunciation, as a general rule, is not altered deliberately, but unconsciously. In the utterance of what is intended and believed to be one and the same vowel or consonant sound, each generation may vary to an almost imperceptible extent from that which preceded it; and, if these slight changes are all in the same direction, the difference may, in the end, become indefinitely great. The normal result in such cases is that the letter comes to have a new phonetic value, and the spelling is not affected. The reason why there were exceptions to this normal course of things in Middle English was partly that sometimes two originally distinct sounds so developed as to become identical, and partly that the orthography of French supplied a kind of external standard.

The history of the changes in English pronunciation down to the time of Chaucer is far too intricate to be treated here with any approach to completeness; but a few of its salient points may be briefly indicated.

The first remark to be made is that the course of development of several of the Old English sounds was quite different in different parts of the country. When we compare the modern English pronunciation of *home*, *stone*, with the Scotch and northern *hame*, *stane*, we see the last term of a divergent development (which began very early) of the Old English long *a* (pronounced as *a* in father). While the northern dialect progressively altered the sound in one direction, the midland and southern dialects progressively altered it in the opposite direction. We cannot precisely tell how far the change in the northern pronunciation had proceeded in the fourteenth century, because the spelling was not affected. But, in other dialects, as we know from various kinds of evidence, the sound was that of the "open ō" as in *lord*, and it was expressed in writing by *o* or *oo*. The words "goad" (Old English *gād*) and "good" (Old English *gōd*) are both written *good*

in Chaucer's spelling, but they were not pronounced alike; if the sounds had been confused they would not have been separated again in later pronunciation; and Chaucer never rimes a word that has the "open *o*" with one containing the "close *o*." The latter retained its old pronunciation (that of the French *o* in *rose*), perhaps a little modified in the direction of its modern equivalent, the *oo* in *cool*.

The long *e*, like the long *o*, had an "open" and a "close" pronunciation, which Chaucer also keeps apart in his rimes. The open ē comes from the Old English (Anglian) *ǣ*, *ēa*, and the close ē from Old English ē, *ēo*. A word like *chepe* to buy (from Old English *cēapian*) which had the open ē, could not correctly rime with a word like *kepe* to keep (from *cēpan*) which had the close ē. In northern dialects, the distinction was so slight that poets freely allowed the two sounds to rime with one another.

In all the dialects of Middle English, the short vowels *ă*, *ĕ*, *ŏ*, when ending an accented syllable, were lengthened, ĕ and ŏ becoming open ē and open ō. In Chaucer's pronunciation, *mete* meat (Old English *mĕte*) was an exact rime to *grete*, the plural of the adjective great (Old English *grēate*), but not to *grete* to greet (Old English *grētan*); *þrote* throat (Old English *þrotu*) rimed with *hote* to command (Old English *hātan*), but not with *bōte* benefit (Old English *bōt*).

The Old English *y* (pronounced *ü*) kept its original sound in the south-west, and, perhaps, in parts of the west midland, being written *u* when short, and *ui* or *uy* when long; in Kent, it had become *e* before the Conquest; elsewhere, it was sounded exactly like *i*, and written, like that sound, indifferently *i* or *y*. The words "fire," "sin," "knit," have, accordingly, in the different localities the three types of form *fuir, ver, fiir; sunne, zenne, sinne; knutte, knette, knitte*. Chaucer, whose London English was mainly east midland, uses occasionally a Kentish form like *knette*.

With regard to the pronunciation of consonants, there is little that needs to be said, as, for the most part, the Old English sounds not only continued unchanged down to the end of the fourteenth century, but remain so to the present day. The pronunciation of initial *f* and *s* as *v* and *z* ("vather came vrom Zummerzet"), which sounds so strange to visitors to the south-western counties, was, in the fourteenth century, current all over the south; in fact, the Kentish *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, of 1340, exhibits this pronunciation in the orthography with greater regularity than any other extant book. The *gh* sound of the letter ȝ gradually

changed into that of *w*, and this change was represented in the spelling. In the earlier of the two MSS of the poetical chronicle called the *Brut*, written at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the author's name appears as "Laȝamon," but, in the later MS, written before 1300, it is turned into "Laweman." On the other hand, in 1340, the Kentish *Ayenbite* has still forms like *zorȝe* (sorrow) instead of Chaucer's *sorwe*.

4. Changes in Vocabulary.

If the Norman conquest had little influence on the development of English grammar, its effects on the vocabulary of the language were profound. It introduced, as we have already observed, an age in which all educated Englishmen spoke French in addition to their native tongue, and, for the most part, wrote nothing but French and Latin. French became the language of law and government, of war and of the chase, and of all that pertained to the life of the wealthier classes. Of the vernacular literature from the Conquest to the middle of the fourteenth century, by far the greater part consisted of translations from French and Latin. It is true that, down to the end of the thirteenth century, nearly all that was written in English was intended for readers who were comparatively unlearned; but even these readers could be reasonably supposed to have some degree of acquaintance with the fashionable language, for, as a rule, the man who absolutely knew nothing but English probably could not read at all. And when, once more, it became customary to write in English for highly educated people, authors could venture, without any fear of not being understood, to borrow freely from the literary, as well as from the popular, vocabulary of the French language.

Under these circumstances, it is not wonderful that the English language received a large and rapidly increasing accession of French words. A few, indeed, seem to have come in even before the Norman conquest: *catchpoll* (*læcepol*) occurs in a glossary of the early eleventh century, and *proud* (Old English *prūt*, Old Norse *prūðr*), if it be really French, must have been adopted much earlier. In the *Peterborough Chronicle*, written about 1154, the French words amount to nearly a score. Their character is significant. They include *emperice* empress, *cuntesse* countess (of Anjou), *curt* court (king Henry II "held micel curt" at London in 1154), *dubbian* to dub a knight, *prison*, *privilege*, *rente*, *tenserie*

(the name of an impost). We are told that king Henry II "dide god *iustice* and makede *pais* [peace]." It is noteworthy, as indicative of foreign influence in the monasteries, that we find such words as *miracle* and *procession*, and that *carited* (charity) appears as the technical name at the abbey of Peterborough for a banquet given to the poor.

About a hundred words of French origin may be collected from the southern and south midland homilies of the twelfth century, although these works are, to a great extent, only slightly modernised transcripts of older originals. Most of these new words, as might be expected, relate to matters of religion or of ecclesiastical observance; but a few, such as *poor*, *poverty*, *riches*, *honour*, *robbery*, must have been already in popular use. The north midland *Ormulum*, written about 1200, is almost entirely free from French words. The author intended his work to be recited to illiterate people, and, therefore, strove to use plain language. But his employment of such a word as *gyn*, ingenuity (a shortened form of the French *engin*) shows that, even in his neighbourhood, the vernacular of the humbler classes had not escaped the contagion of French influence.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, Layamon uses nearly a hundred French words, many of which, it is interesting to note, are not identical with those occurring in the corresponding passages of his original. In the later text of the *Brut*, written about 1275, the reviser has not unfrequently substituted words of French etymology for the native words used by Layamon himself.

The southern version of the *Ancren Riwle*, which is nearly contemporary with Layamon's *Brut*, is much more exotic in vocabulary, more than four hundred French words having been enumerated as occurring in it. It appears, however, from certain passages in this work, that the women for whose instruction it was primarily written were conversant not only with French, but also with Latin. We may, therefore, presume that the author has allowed himself greater freedom in introducing literary French words than he would have done if he had been addressing readers of merely ordinary culture. Still, it is probable that a very considerable number of the words that appear in this book for the first time had already come to be commonly used among educated English people. The occurrence of compounds of French verbs and adjectives with native prefixes, as *bi-spused* (espoused), *mis-ipaied* (dissatisfied), *unstable*, is some evidence that the writer

was in these instances making use of words that were already recognised as English.

In the writings of the end of the thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth, the proportion of Romanic words is so great that we may correctly say that the literary English of the period was a mixed language. The interesting group of poems, perhaps all by one author, consisting of *Alisaunder, Arthur and Merlin* and *Cœur de Lion*, contain many long passages in which nearly every important verb, noun and adjective is French. Nor is this mixed vocabulary at all peculiar to works written in the south of England. In *Cursor Mundi*, and even in the prose of Richard Rolle, which are in the northern dialect, there is, on the average, at least one French word in every two lines. The alliterative poetry of the west midland and northern dialects from about 1350 onwards has an extraordinary abundance of words of French origin, many of which are common to several of the poets of this school, and do not occur elsewhere. The notion prevalent among writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, that Chaucer corrupted the English language by the copious introduction of French words, was curiously wide of the mark. In reality, his language is certainly less marked by Gallicisms than that of most of the other poets of his time, and even than that of some poets of the early years of the fourteenth century. It cannot be absolutely proved that he ever, even in his translations, made use of any foreign word that had not already gained a recognised place in the English vocabulary.

The English literature of the eleventh century is almost wholly written in the southern dialect, which was comparatively little exposed to Scandinavian influence. We find in it, therefore, only a very small number of Norse or Danish words, such as *fēlaga* a business partner, "fellow"; *lagu* law; *hūscarl* "house-carl," member of the king's household; *hūsbonda* master of a house, "husband"; *hūsting* assembly of the "housecarls"; *ūtlaga* outlaw. But when, in the thirteenth century, the language spoken in the north and the north midlands again began to appear in a written form, the strongly Scandinavian character of its vocabulary becomes apparent. The diction of *Ormulum*, whose author bore a Scandinavian name, is full of Danish words, many of which are not otherwise found in English literature, though some of these are preserved in modern rustic dialects. In *Cursor Mundi*, in *Genesis and Exodus*, in *Havelok*, in the writings of Robert Mannyng of Brunne in Lincolnshire, and in the west midland

alliterative poetry, the large Scandinavian element must, even if other peculiarities of dialect had been absent, have been quite sufficient to render these works very difficult reading for natives of the south of England. In several instances, native words that were in extremely common use were superseded by Danish synonyms: *call* took the place of *cīgan* (another Old English word of the same meaning, *cleopian*, remained as *clepe*), *niman* was displaced by *take* and *weorpan* by *cast*.

The freedom with which words could be adopted from French to express complex and abstract notions had a marked effect in checking the augmentation of the English vocabulary by means of composition. The new compounds that arose in Middle English down to the end of the fourteenth century are extremely few. Individual writers occasionally ventured on experiments in this direction, especially in translations of Latin formations like Dan Michel's *ayenbite* ("again-biting") for remorse; or Wyclif's *hamersmyter* for the *malleator* of the *Vulgate*, and *soul-havers* for *animantia*; but their coinages seldom found general acceptance. The prefixes *be-*, *for-* and *with-* (in the sense of "against"), were, however, used to form many new verbs. The old derivative suffixes, for the most part, continued in use. New abstract nouns were formed from adjectives and substantives by the addition of the endings *-ness*, *-hode* and *-hede* (the modern *-hood*, *-head*) and *-ship*; new adjectives in *-sum*, *-ful*, *-lich* (*-ly*); and new agent-nouns in *-ere*. The ending *-ing* was more and more frequently added to verbs to form nouns of action, and, before the end of the fourteenth century, the derivatives so formed had come to be used as mere gerunds. The suffix *-liche* (*-ly*) became a regular means of forming adverbs. As the Old English endings *-en* and *-icge*, used to form nouns denoting persons of the female sex, had become obsolete, the French *-esse* was adopted, and added to native words, as in *goddesse*, *fiendesse* and *sleeresse* (a female slayer). In the southern dialect of the thirteenth century, there appears a curious abundance of feminine agent-nouns formed from verbs by adding the suffix *-ild*, of which there are one or two examples in Old English, though, singularly enough, they have been found only in Northumbrian. Instances of this formation from the *Ancren Riwle* are *beggild* a woman given to begging, *cheapild* a female barguiner, *grucchild* a female grumbler, *mathelild* a female chatterer, *totild* a woman fond of peeping; other words of this formation which do not imply any disparagement are *fostrild* a nurse, and *motild* a female advocate. Besides the feminines

in *-esse*, the fourteenth century shows a few examples of the practice, which afterwards became common, of appending Romanic suffixes to native words. Hampole has *trowable* for credible, Wyclif *everlastingtee* (after *eternitee*), and Chaucer *slogardrie* and *slogardie* ("sluggardry"), and *eggement* instigation (from the verb "to egg").

Several of the new words that came into very general use in or before the fourteenth century are of unknown or doubtful origin. Such are the verb *kill*, which appears first in Layamon under the form *cullen*; and the substantive *smell* (whence the verb), which superseded the Old English *stenc* (stench), originally applicable no less to a delightful odour than to an unpleasant one. Some of the new words, as *left* (hand), which took the place of the Old English *wynstre*, and *qued* bad, have cognates in Low German, but are not likely to have been adopted from the continent; they more probably descend from non-literary Old English dialects. *Boy* and *girl* (the latter originally applied to a young person of either sex), *lad* and *lass*, are still of uncertain origin, though conjectures more or less plausible have been offered.

Not less remarkable than the abundance of new words added to the English vocabulary in the early Middle English period is the multitude of Old English words that went out of use. Anyone who will take the trouble to go through a few pages of an Old English dictionary, noting all the words that cannot be found in any writer later than about the year 1250, will probably be surprised at their enormous number. Perhaps the most convenient way of illustrating the magnitude of the loss which the language sustained before the middle of the thirteenth century will be to take a piece of Old English prose, and to indicate those words occurring in it that became obsolete before the date mentioned. The following passage is the beginning of Aelfric's homily on St Cuthbert, written about A.D. 1000. Of the words printed in italics, one or two occur in *Ormulum* and other works of the beginning of the thirteenth century, but the majority disappeared much earlier.

Cuthbertus, se hālga biscop, scīnende on manegum geearnungum and hāligum *geþincþum, on heofonan rīce* [illegible] *lārēow*, þises halgan līf *endebyrdlīce* mid wundorfullum herungum, Ægþer

Cuthbert, the holy bishop, shining in many merits and holy honours, is in glory, reigning in the kingdom of heaven with the Almighty Creator.

Beda, the wise teacher of the English peoples, wrote this holy man's life in order with wonderful

ge æfter *ānfealdre gereccednysse ge* æfter *lēoþlicere gyddunge*, āwrāt. Ūs sǣde sōþlice Bēda þæt se *ēadiga* Cūthberhtus, þā þā he wæs *eahta-wintre* cild, arn, swā swā him his *nytenlice* yld *tihte*, plegende mid his *efenealdum*; ac se ælmihtiga God wolde stȳran þǣre *nytennysse* his gecorenan Cūthberhtus þurh *mynegunge gelimplices lāreowes*, and āsende him tō ān *þrywintre* cild, þæt his *dyslican* plegan mid *stæþþigum* wordum wīslīce *þrēade*.

praises, both according to simple narration and according to poetic song. Beda has truly told us that the blessed Cuthbert, when he was a child of eight, ran, as his ignorant age impelled him, playing with children of his own age; but Almighty God willed to guide the ignorance of his chosen Cuthbert by the admonition of a fitting teacher, and sent to him a child three years old, who rebuked his foolish play wisely with serious words.

In the first thirty lines of Aelfric's homily on St Gregory, there occur the following words, none of which survived beyond the middle of the thirteenth century: *andweard* present, *gedeorf* labour, *geornfulnyss* study, *gesǣliglīce* blessedly, *bīgeng* worship, *ætbregdan* to turn away, *gebīgan* to subdue, *drohtnung* manner of life, *swutellīce* plainly, *wer* man, *gereccan* to relate, *ēawfæst* pious, *ācenned* born, *æþelboren* nobly born, *mǣgþ* kindred, *wita* senator, *geglengan* to adorn, *swēgan* to sound, be called, *wacol* watchful, *bebod* command, *herigendlīce* laudably, *geswutelian* to manifest.

It is common to regard the obsolescence of Old English words after the Conquest as a mere consequence of the introduction of new words from French. The alien words, it is supposed, drove their native synonyms out of use. It is not to be denied that this was, to a considerable extent, the case. On the whole, however, it would probably be more true to say that the adoption of foreign words was rendered necessary because the native words expressing the same meanings had ceased to be current. When the literary use of English had for one or two generations been almost entirely discontinued, it was inevitable that the words that belonged purely to the literary language should be forgotten. And a cultivated literary dialect always retains in use a multitude of words that were once colloquial, but which even educated persons would consider too bookish to be employed in familiar speech. There were also, no doubt, in the language of English writers from Alfred onwards, very many compounds and derivatives which, though intelligible enough to all readers, were mere artificial formations that never had any oral currency at all. When the scholars of England ceased to write or read English, the literary tradition was broken; the only English generally understood was the colloquial speech, which itself may very likely have lost not a few words in the hundred years after Aelfric's time.

It might, perhaps, have been expected that the special vocabulary of Old English poetry would have survived to a greater extent than we find it actually to have done. We should not, indeed, expect to find much of it in that large portion of Middle English poetry which was written in foreign metres and in imitation of foreign models. But, about the year 1350, there arose a school of poets who, though they were men of learning and drew their material from French and Latin sources, had learned their art from the unliterary minstrels who had inherited the tradition of the ancient Germanic alliterative line. These poets have an extraordinarily abundant store of characteristic words, which are not found in prose literature or in the contemporary poetry of a different school. It might naturally be supposed that this distinctive vocabulary would consist largely of the words that had been peculiar to poetic diction in Old English times. But, in fact, nearly all the words marked in Sweet's *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* with the sign (†) as poetical are wanting in Middle English. The fourteenth century alliterative poets use some of the ancient epic synonyms for "man" or "warrior": *bern, renk, wye* and *freke*, representing the Old English *beorn, rinc, wiga* and *freca*. A few words that in Old English were part of the ordinary language, such as *mǣlan* (Middle English *mele*), to speak, are among the characteristic archaisms of the later alliterative poets. The adjective *æþele*, noble, became, in the form *athil*, one of the many synonyms for "man," and often appears as *hathel*, probably through confusion with the Old English *hæleþ*, a man. The word *burde*, a lady, which is familiar to modern readers from its survival in late ballad poetry, seems to be the feminine of the Old English adjective *byrde*, high-born, of which only one instance is known, and that in prose. Several of the poetic words of the west midland school are of Scandinavian origin, as *trine* and *cair* (Old Norse *keyra*, to drive), which are both used for "to go." The very common word *tulk*, a man, represents, with curious transformation of meaning, the Old Norse *tulkr*, an interpreter. It is possible that some of these words, which are not found in modern dialects, were never colloquial English at all, but were adopted by the poets of the Scandinavian parts of England from the language of the ruling class.

The disappearance of the greater part of the old poetical vocabulary is probably due to its having been, in later Old English times, preserved only in the literary poetry which obtained its diction from the imitation of written models. To this poetry

the alliterative poets of the fourteenth century owed nothing; the many archaisms which they retained were those that had been handed down in the unwritten popular poetry on which their metrical art was based.

5. English Dialects in the Fourteenth Century.

Writers on the history of the English language have been accustomed to quote, as if it related to the condition of things in the year 1385, the following passage from Trevisa: "All the language of the Northumbrians, and specially at York, is so sharp, slitting and froting, and unshape, that we southern men may that language unnethe [hardly] understand." This sentence, however, is not Trevisa's own, but translates a quotation by Higden from William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Pontificum*, written before 1125. The fact that Higden and Trevisa reproduce Malmesbury's words without comment, can hardly be said to prove anything. Still, although Trevisa's adoption of Malmesbury's statement is not, considered by itself, very good evidence as to the amount of dialectal divergence existing in his own time, it appears likely that, on the whole, the difference between the speech of the north and that of the south had rather increased than diminished between the twelfth and the fourteenth century. It is true that the decay of the old inflexions had removed some of the dialectal distinctions of the earlier period, and that greater freedom of intercommunication between different parts of the country had not been without effect in producing some mixture of forms. But, on the other hand, the development of pronunciation had been divergent, and the gains and losses of the vocabulary had been, to a great extent, different in the different regions.

It must be remembered that, throughout the fourteenth century strongly marked differences of dialect were not, as now, confined to the less educated classes; nor is there any clear evidence that any writer attempted to use for literary purposes any other dialect than that which he habitually spoke. It is true that Wyclif was a man of northern birth, and that the language of his writings is distinctly of the midland type. But this is only what might have been expected in the case of a distinguished Oxford teacher, whose life, probably from early boyhood, had been spent at the university. Men of the highest culture continued to write in each of the three or four principal varieties of English. The dialects may have been somewhat less unlike in their written than in their spoken form,

because the spelling was too much under the influence of tradition to represent accurately the divergent development of the original sounds. But, in spite of the nearness of Canterbury to London, it is probable that Chaucer would not have found it quite easy to read the *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, which was written about the time when he was born; nor would he have felt much more at home with the writings of his contemporaries among the west midland alliterative poets or those of northern poets like Laurence Minot. At any rate, a modern reader who has learned to understand Chaucer without great difficulty commonly finds himself very much at a loss when first introduced to the *Ayenbite*, the *Morte Arthure*, or *Sir Gawayne*. Northern prose, indeed, is to us somewhat easier, because, owing to the loss of inflexions, its language is, in some respects, more modern than even that of Chaucer.

An outline of the distinctive features of Middle English dialects has already been given in the sections of this chapter treating of grammar and pronunciation. The following comparative list of forms of words may assist the reader to obtain a general notion of the extent and nature of the diversities of the written language of different parts of the country in the fourteenth century.

	Kentish	*South-Western*	*E. Midland*	*W. Midland*	*Northern*
Fire	veer	vuir, fuir	fiir	fuir	fier
Sin	zenne	sunne	sinne	sinne	sin
I shall say	Ich ssel zigge	Ich schal sigge	I shal seyn	I shal saie	I sal sai
She says	hy zeyth	heo seyth	she seyth	ho saith	scho sais
They say	hy ziggeth	hy siggeth	they seyn	hy, thai sayn	thai sai
Living	liviynde	livinde	livinge	living	livand
Her name	hare nome	hor nome	her name	hur name	her nam
Their names	hare nomen	hure nomen	hir names	hur namus	thair names

The English of Scotland, so far as we know, was hardly used for literary purposes until the last quarter of the fourteenth century, when Barbour wrote his *Bruce*. It is doubtful whether the other works ascribed to Barbour are not of later date, and *The Bruce* itself has come down to us in manuscripts written a hundred years after the author's time. The specific features distinguishing the Scottish dialect from northern English across the border will, therefore, be more conveniently reserved for treatment in a later chapter.

It must not be supposed that the forms above tabulated were the only forms current in the districts to which they are assigned, or that none of them were used outside the regions to which they

typically belong. Local varieties of speech within each dialect area were doubtless many, and the orthography was unfixed and only imperfectly phonetic. Literary works were copied by scribes who belonged to other parts of the country than those in which the works were composed; and, consequently, the texts as we have them represent a mixture of the grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary of different dialects. Vernacular writers, especially poets, often added to their means of expression by adopting words and forms from dialects other than their own. Hence, although in the last years of the fourteenth century the establishment of a common literary language was still in the future, and the varieties even of the written speech continued to be strongly marked, there are few writings of the period that can be regarded as unmixed representatives of any single dialect.

The tendencies that ultimately resulted in the formation of a uniform written language began to act before the fourteenth century closed. In London, the seat of legislative and administrative activity, the influx of educated persons from all parts of the kingdom led to the displacement of the original southern dialect by the dialect of the east midlands, which, in virtue of its intermediate character, was more intelligible both to southern and northern men than northern English to a southerner or southern English to a northerner. The fact that both the university towns were linguistically within the east midland area had, no doubt, also its effect in bringing about the prevalence of this type of English among the educated classes of the capital. The works of Chaucer, which, in the next age, were read and imitated not only in the southern kingdom but even in Scotland, carried far and wide the knowledge of the forms of London English; and the not very dissimilar English of Oxford was, in like manner, spread abroad through the enormous popularity of the writings of Wyclif and his associates. Even in the lifetime of these two great writers, it had already become inevitable that the future common English of literature should be English essentially of the east midland type.

CHAPTER XX

THE ANGLO-FRENCH LAW LANGUAGE

THE profound effects of the Norman conquest on the vocabulary of the English language have already been considered. It remains to notice a special cause which had its own peculiar influence on the language, namely, the long retention of French in the courts of law. The words thus naturalised have become a part of the current speech of Englishmen, and have passed into the language in which English books have been written. This long familiarity with the structure and vocabulary of another tongue had its effect on literary style, just as the long familiarity with Latin had in the case of the monastic writers.

The effect on the vocabulary is certain and considerable, though it is impossible to draw any definite line and decide which words are due to the use of the French language in the courts, and which to its more general use outside the courts. Again, it would require special investigation in the case of individual words to determine when they ceased to be known only to lawyers and became familiar (frequently with a changed significance) to laymen.

It is to the Year Books that we must turn to see what the language of the courts actually was in the middle ages. These books form a series (not unbroken) of summaries of cases decided from the reign of Edward I to that of Henry VIII, while there is a note book of even earlier cases, of the reign of Henry III[1]. Maitland has shown good reason for concluding that this note book was used by Bracton in writing his great treatise.

Some portions of these Year Books have been edited in recent years[2]: but, for the present purpose, the most important edition is that of the year books of Edward II edited by Maitland for the Selden Society. To volume I of this series Maitland prefixed a most valuable *Introduction* from which the following pages[3] are

[1] *Bracton's Note Book*, ed. F. W. Maitland.

[2] Cf. the *Rolls Series*, edited by Horwood and Pike, and the *Selden Society Series*, edited by Maitland, Vols. I, II, III.

[3] Pp. 408—12.

extracts, reprinted by permission of the council of the Selden Society:

"We know 'law French' in its last days, in the age that lies between the Restoration and the Revolution, as a debased jargon. Lawyers still wrote it; lawyers still pronounced or pretended to pronounce it. Not only was it the language in which the moots were holden at the Inns of Court until those ancient exercises ceased, but it might sometimes be heard in the courts of law, more especially if some belated real action made its way thither. The pleadings, which had been put into Latin for the record, were also put into French in order that they might be 'mumbled' by a serjeant to the judges, who, however, were not bound to listen to his mumblings, since they could see what was written in 'the paper books[1].' What is more, there still were men living who thought about law in this queer slang—for a slang it had become. Roger North has told us that such was the case of his brother Francis. If the Lord Keeper was writing hurriedly or only for himself, he wrote in French. 'Really,' said Roger, 'the Law is scarcely expressible properly in English.' A legal proposition couched in the vulgar language looked to his eyes 'very uncouth.' So young gentlemen were adjured to despise translations and read Littleton's *Tenures* in the original[2].

Roger North was no pedant; but he was a Tory, and not only was the admission of English to the sacred plea rolls one of those exploits of the sour faction that had been undone by a joyous monarchy, but there was a not unreasonable belief current in royalist circles that the old French law-books enshrined many a goodly prerogative, and that the specious learning of the parliamentarians might be encountered by deeper and honester research. Nevertheless, that is a remarkable sentence coming from one who lived on until 1734: 'Really the Law is scarcely expressible properly in English.'

Had it been written some centuries earlier it would have been very true, and its truth would have evaporated very slowly. The Act of 1362, which tried to substitute *la lange du paiis* for *la lange francais, qest trope desconue* as the oral language of the courts, is an important historical landmark[3]. But we know that it was

[1] Roger North, *Lives of the Norths*, 1826, I, 80.

[2] *Lives of the Norths*, I, 33; Roger North, *A Discourse on the Study of the Laws*, 1824, p. 18.

[3] 36 Edw. III. stat. 1, c. 15 (Commissioners' edition). Observe *francais*, not *francaise*. Having written *trop*, the scribe puts a tittle over the *p*, which seems to

tardily obeyed, and indeed it attempted the impossible. How tardy the obedience was we cannot precisely tell, for the history of this matter is involved with the insufficiently explored history of written pleadings. Apparently French remained the language of 'pleadings' properly so called, while English became the language of that 'argument' which was slowly differentiated from out of the mixed process of arguing and pleading which is represented to us by the Year Books. Fortescue's words about this matter are well known[1]. In 1549 Archbishop Cranmer, contending with the rebels of Devonshire over the propriety of using English speech in the services of the Church, said, 'I have heard suitors murmur at the bar because their attornies pleaded their causes in the French tongue which they understood not[2].' In Henry VIII's day, when the advocates of a reception of Roman law could denounce 'thys barbarouse tong and Old French, whych now sernyth to no purpose else,' moderate reformers of the Inns of Court were urging as the true remedy that students should be taught to plead in good French: the sort of French, we may suppose, that John Palsgrave, *natyf de Londres et gradué de Paris*, was teaching[3]. No doubt they felt with Roger North that 'really the Law is scarcely expressible properly in English.'

The law was not expressible properly in English until the *lange du paiis* had appropriated to itself scores of French words; we may go near to saying that it had to borrow a word corresponding to almost every legal concept that had as yet been fashioned. Time was when the Englishman who in his English talk used such a word as 'ancestor' or 'heir,' such a word as 'descend,' 'revert,' or 'remain,' must have felt that he was levying an enforced loan. For a while the charge of speaking a barbarous jargon would fall rather upon those who were making countless English words by the simple method of stealing than upon those whose French, though it might be of a colonial type, had taken next to nothing from the vulgar tongue. Very gradually the relation between the two languages was reversed. An Act of Parliament could do little to hasten the process; more might be done by patriotic schoolmasters.

When the history of English law is contrasted with the history

show that he meant *trope*. The word *title* is useful. Thereby we mean 'a small line drawn over an abridged word, to supply letters wanting' (Cotgrave). It is the Spanish *tilde*, which we see, *e.g.* in *doña*.

[1] *Fortescue de Laudibus*, c. 48.

[2] Cranmer, *Remains* (Parker Soc.), p. 170.

[3] Maitland, *English Law and the Renaissance*, pp. 43, 72.

of its next of kin, the existence of law French is too often forgotten. It is forgotten that during the later middle age English lawyers enjoyed the inestimable advantage of being able to make a technical language. And a highly technical language they made. To take one example, let us think for a moment of 'an heir in tail rebutted from his formedon by a lineal warranty with descended assets.' Precise ideas are here expressed in precise terms, every one of which is French: the geometer or the chemist could hardly wish for terms that are more exact or less liable to have their edges worn away by the vulgar. Good came of this and evil. Let us dwell for a moment on an important consequence. We have known it put by a learned foreigner as a paradox that in the critical sixteenth century the national system of jurisprudence which showed the stoutest nationalism was a system that was hardly expressible in the national language. But is there a paradox here? English law was tough and impervious to foreign influence because it was highly technical, and it was highly technical because English lawyers had been able to make a vocabulary, to define their concepts, to think sharply as the man of science thinks. It would not be a popular doctrine that the Englishry of English law was secured by *la lange francais qest trope desconue*; but does it not seem likely that if English law had been more homely, more *volksthümlich*, Romanism would have swept the board in England as it swept the board in Germany?...

Now, as regards vocabulary, there is a striking contrast between the earliest and the latest year books. A single case of Henry VIII's day shows us 'deer, hound, otters, foxes, fowl, tame, thrush, keeper, hunting.' We see that already the reporter was short of French words which would denote common objects of the country and gentlemanly sport. What is yet more remarkable, he admits 'owner[1].' But in Edward II's day the educated Englishman was far more likely to introduce French words into his English than English words into his French. The English lawyer's French vocabulary was pure and sufficiently copious. It is fairly certain that by this time his 'cradle speech' was English; but he had not been taught English, and he had been taught French, the language of good society. Even as a little boy he had been taught his *moun et ma, toun et ta, soun et sa*[2]. Of our reporters we may be far more certain that they could rapidly write French of a sort than that they had ever written an English sentence. John of

[1] Y. B. 12 Hen. VIII, f. 3 (Trin. pl. 3); Pollock, *First Book of Jurisprudence*, 281.
[2] See the treatise of Walter of Biblesworth in Wright, *Vocabularies*, I, 144.

Cornwall and Richard Penkrich had yet to labour in the grammar schools.

Let us look for a moment at some of the words which 'lay in the mouths' of our serjeants and judges: words descriptive of logical and argumentative processes: words that in course of time would be heard far outside the courts of law. We see 'to allege, to aver, to assert, to affirm, to avow, to suppose, to surmise (*surmettre*), to certify, to maintain, to doubt, to deny, to except (*excepcioner*), to demur, to determine, to reply, to traverse, to join issue, to try, to examine, to prove.' We see 'a debate, a reason, a premiss, a conclusion, a distinction, an affirmative, a negative, a maxim, a suggestion.' We see 'repugnant, contrariant, discordant.' We see 'impertinent' and 'inconvenient' in their good old senses. We even see 'sophistry.' Our French-speaking, French-thinking lawyers were the main agents in the distribution of all this verbal and intellectual wealth. While as yet there was little science and no popular science, the lawyer mediated between the abstract Latin logic of the schoolmen and the concrete needs and homely talk of gross, unschooled mankind. Law was the point where life and logic met.

And the lawyer was liberally exercising his right to make terms of art, and yet, if we mistake not, he did this in a manner sufficiently sanctioned by the genius of the language. Old French allowed a free conversion of infinitives into substantives. Some of the commonest nouns in the modern language have been infinitives: *dîner, déjeuner, souper, pouvoir, devoir, plaisir*; and in the list whence we take these examples we see *un manoir* and *un plaidoyer.* English legal language contains many words that were thus made: 'a voucher, an ouster, a disclaimer, an interpleader, a demurrer, a cesser, an estover, a merger, a remitter, a render, a tender, an attainder, a joinder, a rejoinder,' though in some cases the process has been obscured....Were we still 'to pray oyer of a bond,' we should use a debased infinitive, and perhaps it is well that nowadays we seldom hear of 'a possibility of reverter' lest a pedant might say that *revertir* were better. Even the Latin roll felt this French influence: 'his voucher' is *vocare suum*, and *recuperare suum* is 'his recovery.'

But the most interesting specimen in our legal vocabulary of a French infinitive is 'remainder.' In Edward II's day name and thing were coming to the forefront of legal practice. The name was in the making. When he was distinguishing the three writs of

formedon (or better of *forme de doun*) it was common for the lawyer to slip into Latin and to say *en le descendere, en le reverti, en le remanere.* But the French infinitives also were being used, and *le remeindre* (the 'to remain,' the 'to stay out' instead of the reversion or coming back) was soon to be a well-known substantive. It was not confused with a *remenaunt*, a remnant, a part which remains when part is gone. What remained, what stayed out instead of coming back, was the land[1]. In French translations of such deeds as create remainders it is about as common to see the Latin *remanere* rendered by *demorer* as to see an employment of *remeindre*, and it is little more than an accident that we do not call a remainder a demurrer and a demurrer a remainder. In both cases there is a 'to abide'; in the one the land abides for the remainder-man (*celui a qi le remeindre se tailla*); in the other case the pleaders express their intention of dwelling upon what they have said, of abiding by what they have pleaded, and they abide the judgment of the court. When a cause 'stands over,' as we say, our ancestors would say in Latin that it remains, and in French that it demurs (*loquela remanet: la parole demoert*): 'the parol demurs,' the case is 'made a *remanet*.' The differentiation and specification of 'remain' and 'demur,' 'remainder' and 'demurrer,' is an instance of good technical work....

We might dwell at some length on the healthy processes which were determining the sense of words. There is, for example, *tailler* (to cut or carve), which can be used of the action of one who shapes or, as we say, 'limits' a gift in some special manner, but more especially if the result of his cutting and carving is a 'tailed fee.' There is *assez* (enough) with a strange destiny before it, since it is to engender a singular 'asset.' We might endeavour to explain how, under the influence of the deponent verbs *sequi* and *prosequi* which appear upon the Latin roll, the phrase *il fut nounsuivy* (he was non-suited) is a nearer equivalent for *il ne suivit pas* than for *il ne fut pas suivi.* Of our lawyers as word-makers, phrase-makers, thought-makers, much might be said."

[1] Pollock and Maitland, *Hist. Eng. Law*, II. 21; Challis, *Law of Real Property*, 2nd ed. p. 69.

C. (× | ×) ⊥ × (×) ⊥ ⊥ (×) ⊻.

Examples in modern English nursery songs are extremely rare, because of the modern dislike to two chief stresses coming together.

Old English example:

þæt he ælþeodige.

AC. (× | ×) ⊥ × (×) ⊥ × (×) ⊥ (×) ⊻.

Examples in modern English nursery songs are extremely numerous:

and ìn my lády's chámbèr,

sìng a sóng of síxpènce.

Old English examples:

He wearð wide geond þeodland

and wurden underþeodde.

D. Imperfectly balanced form: ⊥ (× ×) ⊥ (×) ⊻ (×) ⊻.

This form always tends to become

⊥ (× ×) ⊥ × ⊥ (×) ⊻ or ⊥ (×) × ⊥ (×) ⊥ (×) ⊻.

Modern English:

fóur and twénty blàckbìrds

tends to become

fóur and twènty bláckbìrds.

Old English:

and útlǽndiscè.

E. Perfectly balanced form: ⊥ (× ×) ⊥ × (×) ⊥ (×) × ⊥.

Modern English (with inner rime):

Jáck fell dòwn and bròke his crówn.

Old English:

se cyng wæs swa swiðe stearc.

The Old English ballad verse, in contradistinction to its modern representative, was quantitative in all four stresses.

That is to say, a stress had to fall either on one long syllable or two short ones. According to Lachmann's original theory, which he applied to some High German ballads, but which must be applied to all Old English ballads, the stress then fell gradually throughout the length of the two syllables, *e.g.*

Ac Godwine hine þa gelette,

and

Godes wiþer sacean | Godes lage bracean.

This is most clearly seen in B and C, where two shorts so used pair absolutely with final stress and half-stress, *e.g.*

> Eac he saette be þam haran
> þaet hi mosten freo faran,
>
> he swa swiðe lufode þa hea deor
> swilce he waere heora faeder.

[illegible] have to fall too low), but only a full-stress. Cf. the example referred to above:

> his rice men hit maendon.

It seems, then, that final feet (with indifference as to the quantity of the half-stress) could be carried over into the middle of a half-line before either a real or artificial inner pause or a change of musical melody

> wide | and side || þa hwile þe | he leofode,
> Eac he saette be þam haran.

α. The normal (inner) foot has a maximum of two unstressed syllables and one stressed long (or two short) syllable(s).

β. Every foot is subject to complete elision of unstressed syllables—but complete elision in a whole half-line is extremely rare.

γ. Between a full-stress and a half-stress complete elision is frequent and more than one syllable unusual, *e.g.*

> and God him geuðe (no sinking)
> þa hwile þe he leofode (one syllable).

Modern English example:

> when in came a blackbird.

On the other hand, after a half-stress before a full-stress, complete elision is, practically, never found. In the overwhelming majority of cases (*c.* 98 or 99%) one sinking syllable occurs, though two are found very frequently. The number of exceptions is negligible:

> ac Godwine hine þa gelette (two syllables)
> ne wearð dreorliere daed (one syllable)[1].

The first foot was composed of the sinking, called the anacrusis or *auftakt*, and the first stress. In the earliest form of the strophe it would seem to have been the rule that the anacrusis of the first line of the couplet should be one syllable longer than that of the second and should never exceed two syllables; the dissyllabic anacrusis was, apparently, used to mark the beginning of a new passage.

[1] For a further discussion of this subject, the reader may be referred to a pa[illegible] by the present writer, read before the London Philological Society, 7 June 1907.

C. (×|×) ⊥ × (×) ⊥ ⊥ (×) ⊻.

Examples in modern English nursery songs are extremely rare, because of the modern dislike to two chief stresses coming together.

Old English example:

þaet he nelþeodige.

AC. (×|×) ⊥ × (×) ⊥ × (×) ⊥ (×) ⊻.

Examples in modern English nursery songs are extremely numerous:

and in my lády's chámber,

sing a sóng of síxpence.

Old English examples:

He wearð wide geond þeodland

and wurden underþeodde.

D. Imperfectly balanced form: ⊥ (× ×) ⊥ (×) ⊻ (×) ⊻.

This form always tends to become

⊥ (× ×) ⊥ × ⊥ (×) ⊻ or ⊥ (×) × ⊥ (×) ⊥ (×) ⊻.

Modern English:

four and twenty blackbirds

tends to become

four and twenty blackbirds.

Old English:

and utlaendisce.

E. Perfectly balanced form: ⊥ (× ×) ⊥ × (×) ⊥ (×) × ⊥.

Modern English (with inner rime):

Jack fell down and broke his crown.

Old English:

se cyng waes swa swiðe stearc.

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and

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swilce he waere heora faeder.

[illegible]

his rice men hit maendon.

It seems, then, that final feet (with indifference as to the quantity of the half-stress) could be carried over into the middle of a half-line before either a *real or artificial inner pause or a change of musical melody*

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In the poem of 959, out of some 24 couplets, 13 have the anacrusis of the first line longer than that of the second; in 8 the anacruses are equal (or both lacking), in only three cases is there a monosyllabic anacrusis in the second line and none in the first, *e.g.*

On his dagum hit godode georne
And God him geuðe,

þaet he wunode in sibbe
þa hwile þe | he leofode.

The fourth, or final, foot differs from the others in the following characteristic:

No final sinking (⊥́ ×) was allowed, *i.e.* feminine rime did not exist in our sense, both such syllables being stressed.

Hence the line could only end in a stress whether full or half in strength.

In the falling types A, AC, C, D, the last foot usually consists of a single stressed syllable:

he saette mycel deorfrið
and he laegde laga þaerwið.

A. and God him geuðe.

C. syððan Dene comon.

AC. gif hi woldon libban.

D. his maeges Eadwardes.

Cf. the modern English nursery rimes:

The maid was in the garden

Took him by the left leg

as chanted by mothers to their children with the heavy final half-stress.

With the ending ⏑́ ⏑ ⏑̀.

(It must be noted that in Old English ballad verse a single long syllable is fairly often divided into ⏑́ ⊥ or ⏑̀ ⊥ as well as into ⏑́ ⏑̀. This may be due to the artificial stress on the second member, *e.g.* A. swiðost þara cyninga.)

A. þa hwile þe, he leofode

AC. Her com Eadward aeþeling

C. and he þar wunode.

Much less frequently the ending ⊥́ × ⊥̀ is found in A, AC, C, *e.g.*

A. Aelfere ealdorman

AO. wala, þæt wæs hreowlic sið

C. þæt he ælþeodiȝe.

From this last two are derived the final feet of such nursery rime rhythms as

"wasn't that a dainty dish."

In the rising types B and E the usual form is one unstressed syllable and a final full-stress, which may be divided into two syllables. The ending with a dissyllabic sinking before the final stress is rarely met with in B and E.

B. and his geferan he todraf

E. Se cyng wæs swa swiðe stearc.

With anapaestic ending

E. ac se uplica wrecend hafað his gemynd.

We have several examples of the verse form

on þære earman byr(i)g

to þan leofan Gode.

We have, further, a number of clear instances of three-beat short verses, perhaps originally meant for strophic use, in conjunction with four-beat verses, *e.g.*

cinges geseon

þæt gedon wearð.

It is a question whether every one of those so-called four-beat verses without any sinkings (even between half-stress and subsequent full-stress) is not to be reckoned here as three-beat.

Side by side with the introduction of this metre into literary use, there are also to be found instances of rime and assonance.

The use of rime and assonance tends to destroy the old system of linked half-lines, but in two different directions. *First*, in proportion as rime and assonance grew in power, alliteration, which had originally been the connecting link between the *two half-lines*, diminished in importance, until eventually it was used mainly *within* each half-line as an adornment. Different alliterating letters occurred in each half-line, and rime or assonance succeeded as a bond.

Hence, the half-lines became independent and the four-beat couplet resulted. Secondly, rime or assonance was further used to link the *full long lines* into couplets. These long lines were then felt to be too long, and a simple means of avoiding such undue length was to use either a weak four-beat *half-line* or, more usually, a three-beat half-line together with a full *four-beat* half-line (of six to eight syllables) to make up the whole. A new line with a variable caesura, either after the 3rd or the 4th beat, was thus constructed. Examples are found in the poem in the *Chronicle* under 1057, *e.g.*

Her com Eadward Æþeling | to Englalonde

and

Eádmùnd cíng | írensíd wàes geclýpŏd.

But it must not be forgotten that both strophic forms are usually found in these Old English poems without the need of either rime, assonance or alliteration. The strophic system seems to have been originally, perhaps, purely rhythmic, and rime, assonance and alliteration merely its adornments.

Lastly, this sung verse is found in other Germanic languages as well as in Old English. The most notable instance of its employment elsewhere is in the famous paraphrase poem of Otfried, who expressly repudiates the solemn rhetorical metre, which must have smacked to him of the worship of the heathen gods. This metre could not have been of Otfried's own composition, since it was not only the metre of the *Nibelungenlied* but the basic metre of other German ballad poems, and is identical with the poems in the *Chronicle*. The following examples of Frisian metric forms seem to show that these also were based on the same old Germanic metrical scheme, originally the common property of all the Teutonic peoples. It is remarkable that the Old Frisian forms (which do not, of course, correspond to the Old English, but to the Middle English stage of the development of this metre) show all the specific Middle English developments. These are:—(1) in consequence of the lengthening of short vowels in open syllables expansions like ⏑́ ×, originally the equivalent of ⊥́, become equal to ⊥́ ×; (2) the use of alliteration as an adornment within the half-line and rime to link the two half-lines together; (3) the apparent loss of the final half-stress in Old Frisian is only found in lines not of Frisian popular origin:

A. mith hórne ànd mith hlúdè.

B. wèl was hím ande síne héi.

AC. Hi wèlde tha stérka Frésàn

(riming with "ùnder sínne tógetha tián").

C. dà dat bréef réed wàs

(riming with "hoe fróe dát mànich Frésa wàs").

D.? Tha thi Kéning Kérl thit ùnderstòd

riming with

E. Tórnig was hìm hir ùmbe sin mód.

It is probable that all D forms ⊥́ × ⊥́ × ⊥̀ × ⊥̀ had at this epoch become ⊥́ × ⊥̀ × ⊥́ × ⊥̀ as most likely in the example above. The same tendency is found in Otfried, in Middle High German and Middle English.

The Frisian and the English were the nearest akin, and we have in both languages a common ballad metre. Perhaps the clearly popular character of this metre explains the absence of erotic songs and popular ballads from Old English literature. Vulgar ballads of all description were in this metre originally, and what epic classical matter was drawn from them was transformed (not always without leaving traces) into the rhetorical courtly metre. In England, the popular metre remained deposed in favour of its younger sister, the rhetorical metre, longer than elsewhere, and its sphere must have been exclusively the vulgar.

J. S. W.

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